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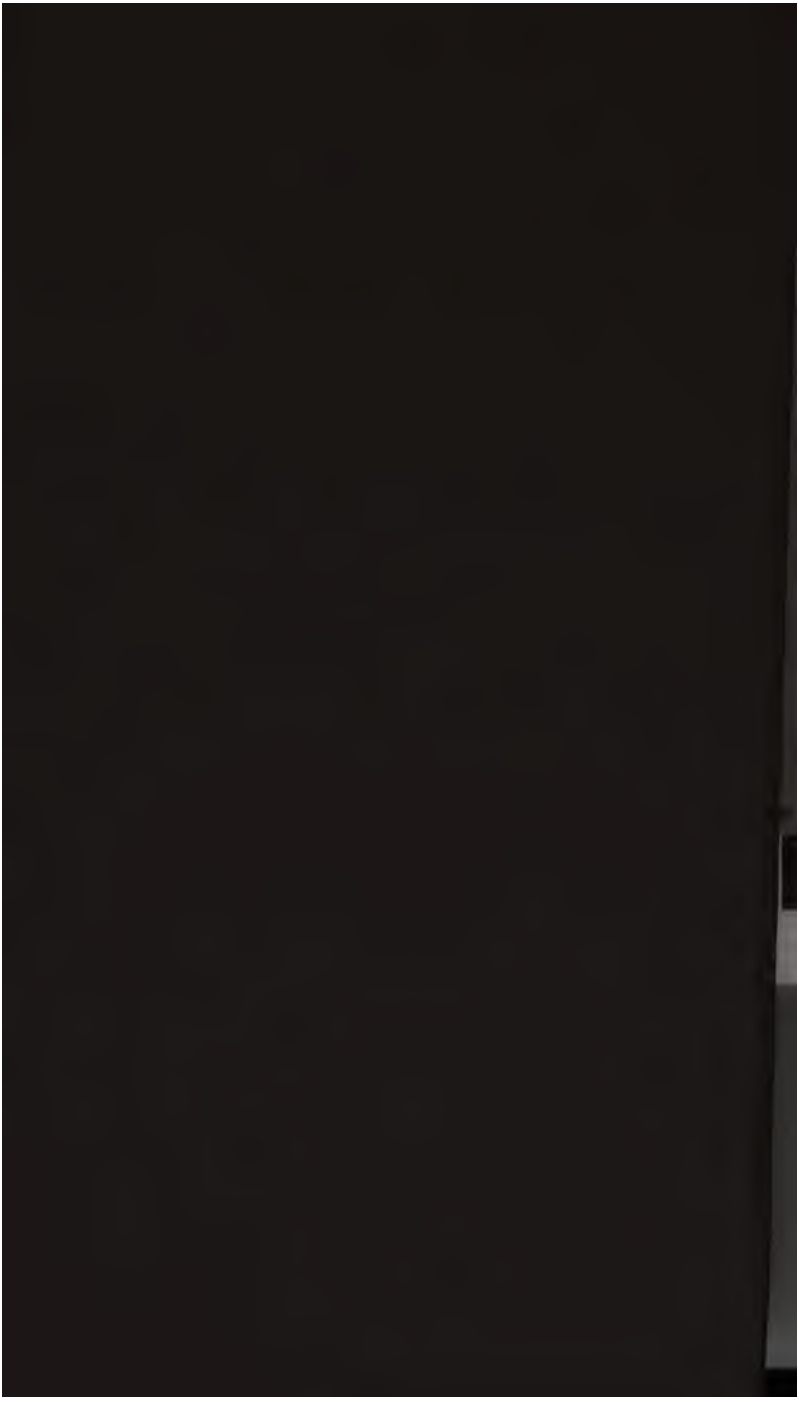
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THE

ANALOGY OF RELIGION,

NATURAL AND REVEALED,

TO THE

CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE.

BY JOSEPH BUTLER, LL.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

BY ALBERT BARNES.

Ejus (analogiæ) hæc vis est, ut id quod dubium est, ad aliquid simile de quo non quæritur, referat; ut incerta certis probet.... Quint. Inst. Orat. l. 1. c. 6.

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IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE HIGHEST OBLIGATIONS

TO THE LATE

LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM,

AND TO

HIMSELF,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S MOST DUTIFUL,

MOST DEVOTED,

AND MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

JOSEPH BUTLER.



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PART II.

OF REVEALED RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

Page

Of the importance of Christianity, ... 139

CHAP. II.

Of the supposed Presumption against a Revelation considered as Miraculous, ... 154

CHAP. III.

Of our incapacity of judging what were to be expected in a Revelation; and the Credibility, from Analogy, that it must contain Things appearing liable to Objections, ... 160

CHAP. IV.

Of Christianity, considered as a Scheme, or Constitution, imperfectly comprehended, ... 173

CHAP. V.

Of the particular System of Christianity; the appointment of a Mediator, and the Redemption of the World by him, ... 180

CHAP. VI.

Of the Want of Universality in Revelation; and of the supposed Deficiency in the proof of it, ... 196

CHAP. VII.

Of the particular evidence for Christianity, ... 212

CHAP. VIII.

Of the objections which may be made against arguing from the Analogy of Nature to Religion, ... 241

Conclusion, ... 251

TWO DISSERTATIONS ON PERSONAL IDENTITY.

Dissert. I. 256

Dissert. II. 264

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

BY ALBERT BARNES.

[NOTE. The following Essay was originally prepared as a Review of Butler's Analogy, for the Quarterly Christian Spectator, and appeared in that work in the Numbers for December, 1830, and March, 1831. With some slight alterations and additions, it is now reprinted as an Introductory Essay to this Edition of the Analogy.]

Philadelphia, Sept. 6, 1832.

IN directing the attention of our readers to the great work whose title we have placed at the head of this article, we suppose we are rendering an acceptable service chiefly to one class. The ministers of religion, we presume, need not our humble recommendation of a treatise so well known as Butler's Analogy. It will not be improper, however, to suggest that even our clerical readers may be less familiar than they should be, with a work which saps all the foundations of unbelief; and may, perhaps, have less faithfully carried out the *principles* of the Analogy, and interwoven them less into their theological system, than might reasonably have been expected. Butler already begins to put on the venerable air of antiquity. He belongs, in the character of his writings at least, to the men of another age. He is abstruse, profound, dry, and, to minds indisposed to thought, is often wearisome and disgusting. Even in clerical estimation, then, his work may sometimes be numbered among those repulsive monuments of ancient wisdom, which men of this age pass by indiscriminately, as belonging to times of barbarous strength and unpolished warfare.

But our design in bringing Butler more distinctly before the public eye, has respect primarily to another class of our readers In an age pre-eminently distinguished for the short-lived productions of the imagination; when reviewers feel themselves bound to serve up to the public taste, rather the deserts and confectionaries of the literary world, than the sound and wholesome fare of other times; when, in many places, it is even deemed stupid and old-fashioned to notice an ancient book, or to speak of the wisdom of our fathers; we desire to do what may lie in our power to stay the headlong propensities of the times, and recal the public mind to the records of past wisdom. We have, indeed, no blind predilection for the principles of other days. We bow down before no opinion because it is ancient. We even feel and believe, that in all the momentous questions pertaining to morals, politics, science, and religion, we are greatly in advance of past ages. And our hearts expand with joy at the prospect of still greater simplicity and clearness, in the statement and defence of the cardinal *doctrines of the* reformation. Most of the monu-

ments of past wisdom, we believe capable of improvement in these respects. Thus we regard the works of Luther, Calvin, Beza, and Owen. We look on them as vast repositories of learning, piety and genius. In the great doctrines which these works were intended to support, we do firmly believe. Still, though we love to linger in the society of such men; and though our humble intellect bows before them, as in the presence of transcendent genius, yet we feel that in some things their views were darkened by the habits of thinking of a less cultivated age than this; that their *philosophy* was often wrong, while the doctrines which they attempted to defend by it were still correct; and that even they would have hailed, on many topics, the increased illumination of later times. Had modern ways of thinking been applied to their works; had the results of a deeper investigation into the laws of the mind, and the principles of biblical criticism, been in their possession, their works would have been the most perfect records of human wisdom which the world contains.

Some of those great monuments of the power of human thought, however, stand complete. By a mighty effort of genius, their authors seized on truth; they fixed it in permanent forms; they chained down scattered reasonings, and left them to be surveyed by men of less mental stature and far feebler powers. It is a proof of no mean talent now to be able to follow where they lead, to grasp in thought, what they had the power to originate. They framed a complete system at the first touch; and all that remains for coming ages, corresponds to what Johnson has said of poets in respect to Homer, to transpose their arguments, new name their reasonings, and paraphrase their sentiments.* The works of such men are a collection of *principles* to be carried into every region of morals and theology, as a standard of all other views of truth. Such a distinction we are disposed to give to Butler's Analogy; and it is because we deem it worthy of such a distinction, that we now single it out from the great works of the past, and commend it to the attention of our readers.

There are two great departments of investigation, respecting the "analogy of religion to the constitution and course of nature." The one contemplates that analogy as existing between the declarations of the Bible, and ascertained facts in the structure of the globe,—the organization of the animal system,—the memorials of ancient history,—the laws of light, heat, and gravitation,—the dimensions of the earth, and the form and motion of the heavenly bodies. From all these sources, objections have been derived against revelation. The most furious attacks have been made, at one time by the geologist, and at another by the astronomer: on one pretence by the antiquarian, and on another by the chymist, against some part of the system of revealed truth. Yet never have any assaults been less successful. Every effort of this kind has resulted in the establishment of this great truth

* Johnson. Preface to Shakspeare.

that no man has yet commenced an investigation of the works of nature, for the purpose of assailing revelation, who did not ultimately exhibit important facts in its confirmation, just in proportion to his eminence and success in his own department of inquiry. We are never alarmed, therefore, when we see an infidel philosopher of real talents, commence an investigation into the works of nature. We hail his labours as destined ultimately to be auxiliary to the cause of truth. We have learned that here Christianity has nothing to fear; and men of science, we believe, are beginning to understand that here infidelity has nothing to hope. As a specimen of the support which Christianity receives from the researches of science, we refer our readers to Ray's Wisdom of God, to Paley's Natural Theology, and to Dick's Christian Philosopher.

The other department of investigation to which we referred, is that which relates to the analogy of revealed truth to the actual facts exhibited in *the moral government of th world.* This is the department which Butler has entered, and which he has so successfully explored. It is obvious that the first is a wider field in regard to the number of facts which bear on the analogy: the latter is more profound and less tangible in relation to the great subjects of theological debate. The first meets more directly the open and plausible objections of the blasphemer; the latter represses the secret infidelity of the human heart, and silences more effectually the ten thousand clamours which are accustomed to be raised against the peculiar doctrines of the Bible. The first is open to successive advances, and will be so, till the whole physical structure of the world is fully investigated and known. The latter, we may almost infer, seems destined to rest where it now is, and to stand before the world as complete as it ever will be, by one prodigious effort of a gigantic mind. Each successive chymist, antiquarian, astronomer, and anatomist, will throw light on some great department of human knowledge, to be moulded to the purposes of religion, by some future Paley, or Dick, or Good; and in every distinguished man of science, whatever may be his religious feelings, we hail an ultimate auxiliary to the cause of truth. Butler, however, seems to stand alone. No adventurous mind has attempted to press his great principles of thought, still further into the regions of moral inquiry. Though the subject of moral government is better understood now than it was in his day; though light has been thrown on the doctrines of theology, and a perceptible advance been made in the knowledge of the laws of the mind, yet whoever now wishes to know "the analogy of religion to the constitution and course of nature," has nowhere else to go but to Butler,—or if he is able to apply the *principles* of Butler, he has only to incorporate them with his own reasonings, to furnish the solution of those facts and difficulties that "perplex mortals." We do not mean by this, that Butler has exhausted the subject. We mean only that no man has attempted to carry it beyond the point where he left it; and that his work, though *not in our* view as complete as modern

habits of thought would permit it to be, yet stands like one of those vast piles of architecture commenced in the middle ages, proofs of consummate skill, of vast power, of amazing wealth, yet in some respects incomplete or disproportioned, but which no one since has dared to remodel, and which no one, perhaps, has had either the wealth, power, or genius, to make more complete.

Of Butler, as a man, little is known. This is one of the many cases where we are compelled to lament the want of a full and faithful biography. With the leading facts of his life as a parish priest and a prelate, we are indeed made acquainted. But here our knowledge of him ends. Of Butler as a man of piety, of the secret, practical operations of his mind, we know little. Now it is obvious, that we could be in possession of no legacy more valuable in regard to such a man, than the knowledge of the secret feelings of his heart; of the application of his own modes of thinking to his own soul, to subdue the ever-varying forms of human weakness and guilt; and of his practical way of obviating, for his personal comfort, the suggestions of unbelief in his own bosom. This fact we know, that he was engaged upon his Analogy during a period of twenty years. Yet we know nothing of the effect on his own soul, of the mode in which he blunted and warded off the poisoned shafts of infidelity. Could we see the internal organization of his mind, as we can now see that of Johnson, could we trace the connexion between his habits of thought and his pious emotions, it would be a treasure to the world equalled perhaps only by his Analogy, and one which we may in vain hope now to possess. The true purposes of biography have been hitherto but little understood. The mere external events pertaining to great men are often of little value. They are *without* the mind, and produce feelings unconnected with any important purposes of human improvement. Who reads now with any emotion except regret that this is all he *can read* of such a man as Butler, that he was born in 1692, graduated at Oxford in 1721, preached at the Rolls till 1726, was made bishop of Durham in 1750, and died in 1752? We learn, indeed, that he was high in favour at the university, and subsequently at court; that he was retiring, modest and unassuming in his deportment; and that his elevation to the Deanery of St. Paul's, and to the princely See of Durham, was not the effect of ambition, but the voluntary tribute of those in power to transcendent talent and exalted, though retiring, worth. An instance of his modest and unambitious habits, given in the record of his life, is worthy of preservation, and is highly illustrative of his character. For seven years he was occupied in the humble and laborious duties of a parish priest, at Stanhope. His friends regretted his retirement, and sought preferment for him. Mr. Secker, an intimate friend of Butler, being made chaplain to the king, in 1732, one day in conversation with Queen Caroline took occasion to mention his friend's name. The queen said she thought he was dead, and asked Archbishop Blackburn if that was not the case. His reply was, "No, madam, but he is buried." He was

hus raised again to notice, and ultimately to high honours, in he hierarchy of the English church.

Butler was naturally of a contemplative and somewhat melan-holy turn of mind. He sought retirement, therefore, and yet voided society. It is probable that natural inclination, as well s the prevalent habits of unbelief in England, suggested the lan of his Analogy. Yet though retiring and unambitious, he vas lauded in the days of his advancement, as sustaining the piscopal office with great dignity and splendour; as conducting he ceremonies of religion with a pomp approaching the gran-leur of the Roman Catholic form of worship; and as treating the neighbouring clergy and nobility with the "pride, pomp, and cir-umstance," becoming, in their view, a minister of Jesus, trans-ormed into a nobleman of secular rank, and reckoned among he great officers of state. These are, in our view, spots in the ife of Butler; and all attempts to conceal them, have only rendered hem more glaring. No authority of antiquity, no plea of the grandeur of imposing rites, can justify the pomp and circum-tance appropriate to an English prelatical bishop, or invest with acred authority the canons of a church, that appoints the hum ble ministers of him who had not where to lay his head, to the plendours of a palace or the pretended honours of an archiepisco-al throne—to a necessary alliance, under every danger to per-onal and ministerial character, with profligate noblemen, or ntriguing and imperious ministers. But Butler drew his title to nemory in subsequent ages, neither from the tinsel of rank, the taff and lawn of office, nor the attendant pomp and grandeur aris-ng from the possession of one of the richest benefices in Eng-and. Butler the *prelate* will be forgotten. Butler the *author of he Analogy* will live to the last recorded time.

In the few remains of the life of Butler, we lament, still more han any thing we have mentioned, that we learn nothing of his abits of study, his mode of investigation, and especially the *pro-ess* by which he composed his Analogy. We are told indeed hat it combines the results of his thoughts for twenty years, and is observations and reading during that long period of his life. He is said to have written and re-written different parts of it, to ave studied each word, and phrase, until it expressed precisely is meaning and no more. It bears plenary evidence, that it nust have been written by such a condensing and epitomizing rocess. Any man may be satisfied of this, who attempts to express the thoughts in other language than that employed in he Analogy. Instinctively the sentences and paragraphs will swell out to a much greater size, and defy all the powers we possess to reduce them to their primitive dimensions, unless hey be driven within the precise enclosures prescribed by the nind of Butler. We regret in vain that this is all our know-edge of the mechanical and mental process by which this book vas composed. We are not permitted to see him at his toil, to nark the workings of his *mind*, and to learn the art of looking *ntensely at a thought, until* we see it standing alone, aloof from

all attendants, and prepared for a permanent location where the author intended to fix its abode, to be contemplated as he viewed it, in all coming ages. We can hardly repress our indignation, that those who undertake to write the biography of such gifted men, should not tell us less of their bodies, their trappings, their honours and their offices, and more of the workings of the spirit, the process of subjecting and restraining the native wanderings of the mind. Nor can we suppress the sigh of regret that he has not himself revealed to us, what no other man could have done; and admitted subsequent admirers to the intimacy of friendship, and to a contemplation of the process by which the Analogy was conceived and executed. Over the past however it is in vain to sigh. Every man feels that hitherto we have had but little *Biography*. Sketches of the external circumstances of many men we have—genealogical tables without number, and without end—chronicled wonders, that such a man was born and died, ran through such a circle of honours, and obtained such a mausoleum to his memory. But histories of *mind* we have not; and for all the great purposes of knowledge, we should know as much of the *man*, if we had not looked upon the misnamed biography.

We now take leave of Butler as a man, and direct our thoughts more particularly to his great work. Those were dark and portentous times which succeeded the reign of the second Charles. That voluptuous and witty monarch, had contributed more than any mortal before or since his time, to fill a nation with infidels, and debauchees. Corruption had seized upon the highest orders of the state; and it flowed down on all ranks of the community. Every grade in life had caught the infection of the court. Profligacy is alternately the parent and the child of unbelief. The unthinking multitude of courtiers and flatterers, that fluttered around the court of Charles had learned to scoff at Christianity, and to consider it as not worth the trouble of anxious thought. The influence of the court extended over the nation. It soon infected the schools and professions: and perhaps there has not been a time in British history, when infidelity had become so general, and had assumed a form so malignant. It had attached itself to dissoluteness, deep, dreadful, and universal. It was going hand in hand with all the pleasures of a profligate court, it was identified with all that actuated the souls of Charles and his ministers; it was the kind of infidelity which fitted an unthinking age—scorning alike reason, philosophy, patient thought, and purity of morals. So that in the language of Butler, "it had come to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of investigation, but that it is now at length, discovered to be fictitious, and accordingly they treat it, as if in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." In times of such universal profligacy and

infidelity arose in succession, Locke, Newton, and Butler, the two former of whom we need not say have been unsurpassed in great powers of thought, and in the influence which they exerted on the sentiments of mankind. It needed such men to bring back a volatile generation to habits of profound thought in the sciences. It needed such a man as Butler, in our view not inferior in profound thought to either, and whose works will have a more permanent effect on the destinies of men, than both —to arrest the giddy steps of a nation, to bring religion from the palace of a scoffing prince and court to the bar of sober thought, and to show that Christianity was not undeserving of sober inquiry. This was the design of the Analogy. It was not so much to furnish a complete demonstration of the *truth* of religion, as to show that it could not be proved to be false. It was to show that it accorded with a great, every where seen, system of things actually going on in the world; and that attacks made on Christianity were to the same extent assaults on the course of nature, and of nature's God. Butler pointed the unbeliever to a grand system of things in actual existence, a *world* with every variety of character, feeling, conduct and results—a system of things deeply mysterious, yet developing great principles, and bearing proof that it was under the government of God. He traced certain indubitable acts of the Almighty in a course of nature, whose existence could not be denied. Now if it could be shown that Christianity contained like results, acts, and principles; if it was a scheme involving no greater mystery, and demanding a correspondent conduct on the part of man, it would be seen that it had proceeded from the same author. In other words the objections alleged against Christianity, being equally applicable against the course of nature, could not be valid. To show this, was the design of Butler. In doing this, he carried the war into the camp of the enemy. He silenced the objector's arguments; or if he still continued to urge them, showed him that with equal propriety they could be urged against the acknowledged course of things, against his own principles of conduct on other subjects, against what indubitably affected his condition here, and what *might* therefore affect his doom hereafter.

We are fond of thus looking at the Bible as *part* of one vast plan of communicating truth to created intelligences. We know it is the fullest, and most grand, of all God's ways of teaching men, standing amidst the sources of information, as the sun does amidst the stars of heaven, quenching their feeble glimmerings in the fulness of its meridian splendour. But to carry forward the illustration, the sun does, indeed, cause the stars of night to "hide their diminished heads," but we see in both but one system of laws; and whether in the trembling of the minutest orb that emits its faint rays to us from the farthest bounds of space, or the full light of the sun at noon-day, we trace the hand of the same God, and feel that "all are but parts of one stupendous whole." Thus it is with revelation. We know that its truths comprise all that the *world elsewhere* contains, that its authority

is supreme over all the other sources of knowledge, and all the other *facts* of the moral system. But there *are* other sources of information—a vast multitude of facts that we expect to find in accordance with this brighter effulgence from heaven, and it is these *facts* which the Analogy brings to the aid of revelation. The Bible is in religion, what the telescope is in astronomy. It does not contradict any thing before known; it does not annihilate any thing before seen; it carries the eye forward into new worlds, opens it upon more splendid fields of vision, and displays grander systems, where we thought there was but the emptiness of space, or the darkness of illimitable and profound night; and divides the milky way into vast clusters of suns and stars, of worlds and systems. In all the boundlessness of these fields of vision, however, does the telescope point us to any new laws of acting, any new principle by which the universe is governed? The astronomer tells us not. It is the hand of the same God which he sees, impelling the new worlds that burst on the view in the immensity of space, with the same irresistible and inconceivable energy, and encompassing them with the same clear fields of light. So we expect to find it in revelation. We expect to see plans, laws, purposes, actions and results, uniform with the facts in actual existence before our eyes. Whether in the smiles of an infant, or the wrapt feelings of a seraph; in the strength of manhood, or the power of Gabriel; in the rewards of virtue here, or the crown of glory hereafter, we expect to find the Creator acting on one grand principle of moral government, applicable to *all* these facts, and to be vindicated by the same considerations.

When we approach the Bible, we are at once struck with a most striking correspondence of plan to that which obtains in the natural world. When *we* teach theology in our schools we do it by system, by form, by technicalities. We frame what we call a "body of divinity," expecting all its parts to cohere and agree. We shape and clip the angles and points of our theology, till they shall fit, like the polished stones of the temple of Solomon, into their place. So when we teach astronomy, botany, or geography, it is by a regular system before us, having the last discoveries of the science located in their proper place. But how different is the plan, which, in each of these departments, is pursued by infinite wisdom. The truths which God designs to teach us, lie spread over a vast compass. They are placed without much apparent order. Those of revelation lie before us, just as the various *facts* do, which go to make up a system of botany or astronomy. The great Author of nature has not placed all flowers in a single situation, nor given them a scientific arrangement. They are scattered over the wide world. Part bloom on the mountain, part in the valley; part shed their fragrance near the running stream; part pour their sweetness in the desert air "in the solitary waste where no man is;" part climb in vines to giddy heights, and part are found in the bosom of the mighty waters. He that forms a theory of botany must do it, therefore

with hardy toil. He will find the *materials*, not the *system*, made ready to his hands. He will exhaust his life perhaps in his labour, before the system stands complete. Why should we not expect to find the counterpart of all this in religion? When we look at the Bible, we find the same state of things. At first but a ray of light beamed upon the dark path of our apostate parents, wandering from paradise. The sun that had stood over their heads in the garden of pleasure, at their fall sunk to the west and left them in the horrors of a moral midnight. A single ray, in the promise of a Saviour, shot along their path, and directed to the source of day. But did God reveal a whole system? Did he tell them all the truth that he knew? Did he tell all that we know? He did just as we have supposed in regard to the first botanist. The eye was fixed on one truth distinctly. Subsequent revelations shed new light; advancing facts confirmed preceding doctrines and promises; rising prophets gave confirmation to the hopes of men; precepts, laws, and direct revelations rose upon the world, until the system of revealed truth is now complete. Man has all he can have, except the facts which the progress of things is yet to develope in *confirmation* of the system; just as each new budding flower goes to confirm the just principles of the naturalist, and to show what the system is. Yet how do we possess the system? As arranged, digested, and reduced to order? Far from it. We have the book of revelation just as we have the book of nature. In the beginning of the Bible, for example, we have a truth abstractly *taught*, in another part *illustrated* in the life of a prophet; as we advance it is *confirmed* by the fuller revelation of the Saviour or the apostles, and we find its *full development* only when the whole book is complete. Here stands a law; there a promise; there a profound mystery, unarranged, undigested, yet strikingly accordant with a multitude of correspondent views in the Bible, and with as many in the moral world. Now here is a mode of communication, which imposture would have carefully avoided, because detection, it would foresee, must, on such a plan, be unavoidable. It seems to us that if men had intended to *impose* a system on the world, it would have been somewhat in the shape of our bodies of divinity, and therefore very greatly unlike the plan which we actually find in the Bible. At any rate, we approach the Scriptures with this strong presumption in favour of its truth, that it accords precisely with what we see in astronomy, chymistry, botany, and geography, and that the mode of constructing systems in all these sciences, is exactly the same as in dogmatical theology.

We have another remark to make on this subject. The botanist does not shape his facts. He is the collector, the arranger, not the originator. So the framer of systems in religion *should* be—and it is matter of deep regret that *such* he has *not* been. He should be merely the collector, the arranger, not the originator of the doctrines of the gospel. Though then we think him of some importance, *yet we do not* set a high value on his labours.

We honour the toils of a man who tells of the uses, beauties and medicinal properties of the plant, far more than of him who merely declares its rank, its order, its class in the Linnæan system. So in theology, we admire the greatness of mind which can bring out an original truth, illustrate it, and show its proper bearing on the spiritual interests of our race, far more than we do the plodding chiseller who shapes it to its place in his system. It makes no small demand on our patience, when we see the system-maker remove angle after angle, and apply stroke after stroke, to some great mass of truth which a mighty genius has struck out, but which keen-eyed and jealous orthodoxy will not admit to its proper bearing on the souls of men, until it is located in a creed, and cramped into some frame-work of faith, that has been reared around the Bible. Our sympathy with such men as Butler, and Chalmers, and Foster, and Hall, is far greater than with Turretine or Ridgely. With still less patience do we listen to those whose only business it is to shape and reduce to prescribed form; who never look at a passage in the Bible or a fact in nature, without first robbing it of its freshness, by an attempt to give it a sectarian location:—who never stumble on an original and unclassified idea, without asking whether the system-maker had left any niche for the late-born intruder; and who applies to it all tests, as to a non-descript substance in chymistry, in order to fasten on it the charge of an affinity with some rejected confession, or some creed of suspected name. This is to abuse reason and revelation, for the sake of putting honour on creeds. It is to suppose that the older creed-makers had before them all shades of thought, all material and mental facts, all knowledge of what mind *has been and can be*, and all other knowledge of the adaptedness of the Bible, to every enlarged and fluctuating process of thought. It is to doom the theologian to an eternal dwelling in Greenland frost and snows, instead of sending him forth to breathe the mild air of freedom, and to make him a large-minded and fearless interpreter of the oracles of God.

It is not our intention to follow the profound author of the Analogy through his laboured demonstrations, or to attempt to offer an abridged statement of his reasoning. Butler, as we have already remarked, is incapable of abridgement. His thoughts are already condensed into as narrow a compass, as the nature of language will admit. All that we purpose to do, is to give a *specimen* of the argument from analogy in support of the Christian religion, without very closely following the book before us.

The main points at issue between Christianity and its opposers are, whether there is a future state; whether our conduct here will affect our condition there; whether God so controls things as to reward and punish; whether it is reasonable to act with reference to our condition hereafter; whether the favour of God is to be obtained with, or without the mediation of another, whether crime and suffering are indissolubly united in the moral government of God; and whether Christianity is a scheme in accordance with the acknowledged laws of the universe, and is

pported by evidence so clear as to make it proper to act on the lief of its truth.

Infidelity, in its proper form, approaches man with the declaation that there cannot be a future state. It affirms, often with nuch apparent concern, that there can be no satisfactory evidence of what pertains to a dark, invisible, and distant world; that the mind is incompetent to set up landmarks along its future course, and that we can have no certain proof that *in* that dark abyss, we shall live, act, or think at all. It affirms that the whole analogy of things is against such a supposition. We have no evidence, it declares, that one of all the millions who have died, has lived beyond the grave. In sickness, and old age, it is said the body and soul seem alike to grow feeble and decay, and both seem to expire together. That they ever exist separate, it is said, has not been proved. That such a dissolution and separate existence should take place, is affirmed to be contrary to the analogy of all other things. That the soul and body should be united again, and constitute a *single* being, is said to be without a parallel fact in other things, to divest it of its inherent improbability.

Now let us suppose for a moment that, endued with our present powers of thought, we had been united to bodies of far feebler frame and much more slender dimensions, than we now inhabit. Suppose that our spirits had been doomed to inhabit the body of a crawling reptile, scarce an inch in length, prone on the earth, and doomed to draw out our little length to obtain locomotion from day to day, and scarce noticeable by the mighty beings above us. Suppose in that lowly condition, as we contemplated the certainty of our speedy dissolution, we should look upon our kindred reptiles, the partners of our cares, and should see their strength gradually waste, their faculties grow dim, their bodies become chill in death. Suppose now it should be revealed to us, that those bodies should undergo a transformation; that at no great distance of time they should start up into new being; that in their narrow graves there should be seen the evidence of returning life; and that these same deformed, prone, and decaying frames, should be clothed with the beauty of gaudy colours, be instinct with life, leave the earth, soar at pleasure in a new element, take their rank in a new order of beings, be divested of all that was offensive and loathsome in their old abode in the eyes of other beings; and be completely dissociated from all the plans, habits, relations and feelings of their former lowly condition. We ask whether against this supposition there would not lie all the objections, which have ever been alleged against the doctrine of a resurrection, and a future state? Yet the world has long been familiar with changes of this character. The changes which animal nature undergoes to produce the gay colours of the butterfly, have as much antecedent improbability as those pertaining to the predicted resurrection, and for aught that we can see, are improbabilities of precisely the same nature. So in a case still more in point. No two states which revelation has

presented, as actually contemplated in the condition of man, are more unlike than those of an unborn infant, and of a hoary man ripe with wisdom and honours. To us it appears that the state of the embryo, and that of Newton, Locke, and Bacon, have at least, as much dissimilarity, as those between man here, and man in a future state. Grant that a revelation could be made to such an embryo, and it would be attended with all the difficulties that are supposed to attend the doctrine of revelation. That this unformed being should leave the element in which it commences its existence; that it should be ushered into another element with powers precisely adjusted to its new state, and useless in its first abode—like the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot; that it should assume relations to hundreds, and thousands of other beings at first unknown, and these, too, living in what to the embryo must be esteemed a different world; that it should be capable of traversing seas, of measuring the distances of stars, of guaging the dimensions of suns; that it could calculate with unerring certainty the conjunctions and oppositions, the transits and altitudes of the vast wheeling orbs of immensity, is as improbable as any change, which man, under the guidance of revelation, has yet expected in his most sanguine moments. Yet nothing is more familiar to us. So the analogy might be run through all the changes which animals and vegetables exhibit. Nor has the infidel a right to reject the revelations of Christianity respecting a future state, until he has disposed of facts of precisely the same nature with which our world abounds.

But are we under a moral government? Admitting the probability of a future state, is the plan on which the world is actually administered, one which will be likely to affect our condition there? Is there any reason to believe, from the analogy of things, that the affairs of the universe will ever in some future condition, settle down into permanency and order? That this is the doctrine of Christianity, none can deny. It is a matter of clear revelation—indeed it is the entire basis and structure of the scheme, that the affairs of justice and of law, are under suspense; that "judgment now lingereth and damnation slumbereth;" that, crime is for the present dissociated from wo, for a specific purpose, viz. that mortals may repent and be forgiven; and that there will come a day when the native indissoluble connexion between sin and suffering shall be restored, and that they shall then travel on hand in hand for ever. This is the essence of Christianity. And it is a most interesting inquiry, whether any thing like this can be found in the actual government of the world.

Now it cannot be denied, that on this subject, men are thrown into a most remarkable—a chaotic mass of facts. The world is so full of irregularity—the lives of wicked men are apparently so often peaceful and triumphant—virtue so often pines neglected in the vale of obscurity, or weeps and groans under the *iron* hand of the oppressor, that it appals men in all their

attempts to reduce the system to order. Rewards and punishments, are so often apparently capricious, that there is presumptive proof, in the mind of the infidel, that it will always continue so to be. And yet what if, amidst all this apparent disorder there should be found the elements of a grand and glorious system, soon to rise on its ruins? What if, amidst all the triumphs of vice, there should still be found evidence to prove that God works by an unseen power, but most effectually, in sending judicial inflictions on men even now? And what if, amidst these ruins, there is still to be found evidence, that God regards virtue even here, and is preparing for it appropriate rewards hereafter; like the parts of a beautiful temple strewed and scattered in the ruins of some ancient city, but still if again placed together, symmetrical, harmonious, and grand?

Christianity proceeds on the supposition that such is the fact and amidst all the wreck of human things, we can still discover certain fixed results of human conduct. The consequences of an action do not terminate with the commission of the act itself, nor with the immediate effect of that act on the body. They travel over into future results, and strike on some other, often some distant part of our earthly existence. Frequently the true effect of the act is not seen except *beyond* some result that may be considered as the accidental one; though for the *sake* of that *immediate* effect the act may have been performed. This is strikingly the case in the worst forms of vice. The immediate effect, for example, of intemperance, is a certain pleasurable sensation for the sake of which the man became intoxicated. The true effect, or the effect as *part of moral government*, travels *beyond* that temporary delirium, and is seen in the loss of health, character, and peace,—perhaps not terminating in its consequences during the whole future progress of the victim. So the direct result of profligacy may be the gratification of passion;—of avarice, the pleasurable indulgence of a groveling propensity;—of ambition, the glow of feeling in splendid achievements, or the grandeur and pomp of the monarch, or the warrior;—of dueling, a pleasurable sensation that revenge has been taken for insult. But do the consequences of these deeds terminate here? If they did, we should doubt the moral government of God. But in regard to their ultimate effects, the universe furnishes but one lesson. The consequences of these deeds travel over in advance of this pleasure, and fix themselves deep beyond human power to eradicate them, in the property health, reputation or peace of the man of guilt;—nay, perhaps the consequences thicken until we take our *last* view of him, as he gasps in death, and all that we know of him, as he goes from our observation, is that heavier thunderbolts are seen trembling in the hand of God, and pointing their vengeance at the head of the dying man. What infidel can prove that some of the results, at least, of that crime, may not travel on to meet him in his future being, and beset his goings there?

Further, as a *general* law the virtuous are prospered, and the

wicked punished. Society is organized for this. Laws are made for this. The entire community throws its arms around the man of virtue; and in like manner, the entire community, by its laws, gather around the transgressor. Let a man attempt to commit a crime, and before the act is committed, he may meet with fifty evidences, that he is doing that which will involve him in ruin. He must struggle with his conscience. He must contend with what he knows to have been the uniform judgment of men. He must keep himself from the eye of justice, and that very attempt is proof to him that there is a moral government He must overcome all the proofs which have been set up, that men approve of virtue. He must shun the presence of every man, for from that moment, every member of the community, becomes, of course, his enemy. He must assume disguises to secure him from the eye of justice. He must work his way through the community during the rest of his life, with the continued consciousness of crime; eluding by arts the officers of the law, fearful of detection at every step, and never certain that at some unexpected moment, his crime may not be revealed, and the heavy arm of justice fall on his guilty head. Now all this proves that in *his* view he is under a moral government. How knows he, that the same system of things may not meet him hereafter; and that in some future world the hand of justice may not reach him? The fact is sufficiently universal to be a proper ground of action, that virtue meets with its appropriate reward and vice is appropriately punished. So universal is this fact, that more than nine tenths of all the world, have confidently acted on its belief. The young man expects that industry and sobriety will be recompensed in the healthfulness, peace, and honour of a venerable old age. The votary of ambition expects to climb the steep, "where fame's proud temple shines afar," and to enjoy the rewards of office or fame. And so uniform is the administration of the world in this respect, that the success of one generation, lays the ground for the confident anticipations of another. So it has been from the beginning of time, and so it will be to the end of the world. We ask why should not man, with equal reason, suppose his conduct now may affect his destiny, at the next moment or the next year beyond his death? Is there any violation of reason in supposing that the soul may be active there, and meet there the results of conduct here? Can it be proved that death suspends, or annihilates existence? Unless it can, the man who acts in his youth with reference to his happiness at eighty years of age, is acting most unwisely if he does not extend his thoughts to the hundredth, or the thousandth year of his being.

What if it should be found, as the infidel cannot deny it *may be*, that death suspends not existence, so much as one night's sleep? At the close of each day, we see the powers of man prostrate. Weakness and lassitude come over all the frame. A torpor elsewhere unknown in the history of animal nature, spreads *through all the faculties*. The eyes close, the ears become deaf

to hearing, the palate to taste, the skin to touch, the nostrils to smell, all the faculties are locked in entire insensibility, alike strangers to the charms of music, the tones of friendship, the beauties of creation, the luxury of the banquet, and the voice of revelry. The last indication of *mind* to appearance is gone, or the indications of its existence are far feebler than when we see man *die* in the full exertion of his mental powers, sympathizing in feelings of friendship, and cheered by the hopes of religion. Yet God passes his hand over the frame when we sleep, and instinct with life, again we rise to business, to pleasure, or to ambition. But what are the facts which meet us, as the result of the doings of yesterday? Have we lost our hold on those actions? The man of industry yesterday, sees to-day, his fields waving in the sun, rich with a luxuriant harvest. The professional man of business finds his doors crowded, his ways thronged, and multitudes awaiting his aid in law, in medicine, or in the arts. The man of virtue yesterday, reaps the rewards of it to-day, in the respect and confidence of mankind; and in the peace of an approving conscience, and the smiles of God. The man of intemperate living rises to nausea, retching, pain, and wo. Poverty, this morning clothes in rags the body of him who was idle yesterday; and disease clings to the goings, and fixes itself in the blood of him, who was dissipated. Who can tell but death shall be *less* a suspension of existence than this night's sleep? Who can tell but that the consequences of our doings here, shall travel over our sleep in the tomb, and greet us in our awaking in some new abode? Why should they not? Why should God appoint a law so wise, and so universal here, that is to fail the moment we pass to some other part of our being?

Nor are the results of crime confined to the *place* where the act was committed. Sin, in youth, may lay the foundation of a disease, that shall complete its work on the other side of the globe. An early career of dissipation in America, may fix in the frame the elements of a disorder, that shall complete its work in the splendid capital of the French, or it may be in the sands of the Equator, or the snows of Siberia. If crime may thus travel in its results around the globe, if it may reach out its withering hand over seas, and mountains, and continents, and seek out its fleeing victim in the solitary waste, or in the dark night, we see not why it may not be stretched across the grave, and meet the victim there—at least we think the analogy should make the transgressor tremble, and turn pale as he flies to eternity.

But it is still objected that the rewards given to virtue, and the pain inflicted on vice, are not universal, and that there is not, therefore, the proof that was to have been expected, that they will be hereafter. Here we remark that it is evidently not the design of religion to affirm that the *entire* system can be seen in our world. We say that the system is not fully developed, and that there is, therefore, presumptive proof that there is another state of things. *Every one* must have been struck with the fact,

that human affairs are cut off in the midst of their way, and their completion removed to some other world. No earthly system or plan has been carried out to its full extent. There is no proof that we have *ever* seen the full result of any given system of conduct. We see the effect of vice as far as the structure of the *body* will allow. We see it prostrate the frame, produce disease, and terminate in death. We see the effect on body and mind alike, until we lose our sight of the man in the grave. There our observation stops. But who can tell what the effect of intemperance, for example, would be in this world, if the body were adjusted to bear its results a little longer? Who can calculate with what accelerated progress the consequences would thicken beyond the time when we now cease to observe them? And who can affirm that the same results may not await the mind hereafter? Again we ask the infidel why they should not? *He* is bound to tell us. The presumption is against him.

Besides, the effect of vice is often arrested in its first stage. A young man suddenly dies. For some purpose, unseen to human eyes, the individual is arrested, and the *effect* of his crimes is removed into eternity. Why is this more improbable than that the irregularities of youth should run on, and find their earthly completion in the wretchedness and poverty of a dishonoured old age. So virtue is often arrested. The young man of promise, of talent, and of piety, dies. The completion of the scheme is arrested. The rewards are dispensed in another world. So says religion. And can the infidel tell us why they should *not* be dispensed there, as well as in the ripe honours of virtuous manhood? This is a question which infidelity *must* answer.

The same remarks are as applicable to communities as to individuals. It is to be remembered here, that virtue has never had a full and impartial trial. The *proper* effect of virtue here, would be seen in a perfectly pure community. Let us suppose such an organization of society. Imagine a community of virtuous men where the most worthy citizens should always be elected to office, where affairs should be suffered to flow on far enough to give the system a complete trial; where vice, corruption, flattery, bribes, and the arts of office-seeking, should be unknown; where intemperance, gluttony, lust, and dishonest gains, should be shut out by the laws, and by the moral sense of the commonwealth; where industry and sobriety should universally prevail, and be honored. Is there any difficulty in seeing that if this system were to prevail for many ages, the nation would be signally prosperous, and gain a wide dominion? And suppose, on the other hand, a community made up on the model of the New-Harmony plan, the asylum of the idle, of the unprincipled, and the profligate. Suppose that the men of the greatest physical power, and most vice, should rule, as they infallibly would do. Suppose there was no law, but the single precept enjoining universal indulgence; and suppose that, under some miraculous and terrible binding together by divine pressure, this community should be kept from falling to pieces, or destroying itself, for a few ages

any difficulty in seeing what would be the proper effect
ne? Indeed, we deem it happy for the world that *one*
Owen has been permitted to live to make the experiment
mall scale, and but *one*, lest the record of total profligacy
orruption should not be confined to the singularly named
Harmony. All this proves there is something either in the
-work of society itself, or in the agency of some Great
presiding over human things, that smiles on virtue and
is on vice. In other words, there is a moral government.
is further to be remarked that, as far as the experiment has
suffered to go on in the world, it has been attended with a
rm result. Nations are suffered to advance in wickedness,
they reach the point, in the universal constitution of things,
is attended with self-destruction. So fell Gomorrah, Baby-
Athens, Rome, expiring just as the drunkard does—by excess
rime, or by enervating their strength in luxury and vice.
body politic, enfeebled by corruption, is not able to sustain
ncumbent load, and sinks, like the human frame, in ruin.
as perished every nation, from the vast dominions of Alex-
r the Macedonian, to the mighty empire of Napoleon, that
been reared in lands wet with the blood of the slain, and
nbent on the pressed and manacled liberties of man. In
nal, as well as in private affairs, the powers of doing evil
exhaust themselves. The frame in which they act is not
l to the mighty pressure, and the nation or the individual
s to ruin. Like some tremendous engine, of many wheels
complicated machinery, when the balance is removed, and
suffered to waste its powers in self-propulsion, without
ks or guides, the tremendous energy works its own ruin,
s the machine in pieces, and scatters its rolling and flying
els in a thousand directions. Such is the frame of society,
such the frame of an individual. So we expect, if God gave
he world to unrestrained evil it would accomplish its own
tion. We think we see in every human frame, and in the
gled and clashing powers of every society, the elements of
and all that is necessary to secure that ruin is to remove
ressure of the hand that now restrains the wild and terrific
ers, and saves the world from self-destruction. So if virtue
a fair trial, we apprehend it would be as complete in its
lts. We expect, in heaven, it will secure its own rewards—
the machine which we have supposed—*always* harmonious
s movements. So in hell, we expect there will be the ele-
ts of universal misrule—and that all the foreign force that
be necessary to secure eternal misery, will be Almighty
er to preserve the terrible powers in unrestrained being, and
ess them into the same mighty prison-house—just like some
antine enclosure that should keep the engine together and
ne locality of its tremendous operations.

ng ago it had passed into a proverb, that "murder will out."
is just an illustration of what we are supposing. Let a
lerer live long enough, and such is the organization of

society, that vengeance will find him out. Such, we suppose, would be the case in regard to *all* crime, if sufficient permanency were given to the affairs of men, and if things were not arrested in the midst of their way. Results *in eternity*, we suppose, are but the *transfer to another state* of results which would take place here, if the guilty were not removed. We ask the infidel,—we ask the Universalist, why this state of things should be arrested by so unimportant a circumstance as death? Here is a uniform system of things—uniform as far as the eye can run it backward into past generations,—uniform, so as to become the foundation of laws and of the entire conduct of the world,—and uniform, so far as the eye can trace the results of conduct *forward* in all the landmarks set up along our future course. Unless God change, and the affairs of other worlds are administered on principles different from *ours*, it must be that the system will receive its appropriate termination *there*. It belongs to the infidel and the Universalist to prove, that the affairs of the universe come to a solemn pause at death; that we are ushered into a world of different laws, and different principles of government,—that we pass under a new sceptre, a sceptre too, not of *justice*, but of disorder, misrule, and the arrest of all that God has begun in his administration;—that the *results* of conduct, manifestly but just commenced here, are finally arrested by some strange and unknown principle at our death;—and that we are to pass to a world of which we know nothing, and in which we have no means of conjecturing what will be the treatment which crime and virtue will receive. We ask them, can they *demonstrate* this strange theory? Are men willing to risk their eternal welfare on the presumption, *that God will be a different being there from what he is here, and that the conduct which meets with wo here, will there meet with bliss?* Why not rather suppose,—as Christianity does—according to all the analogy of things, that the same Almighty hand shall be stretched across all worlds alike, and that the bolts which vibrate in his hand now, and point their thunders at the head of the guilty, shall fall with tremendous weight there, and close, in eternal life and death, the scenes begun on earth? We know of no men who are acting under so fearful probabilities against their views, as those who deny the doctrine of future punishment. Here is a long array of uniform facts, all, as we understand them, founded on the presumption that the scheme of the infidel cannot be true. The system is continued through all the revolutions to which men are subject. Conduct, in its results, travels over all the interruptions of sleep, sickness, absence, delirium, that man meets with, and passes on from age to age.

The conduct of yesterday terminates in results to-day; that of youth extends into old age; that of health reaches even *beyond* a season of sickness; that of sanity, *beyond* a state of delirium. Crime here meets its punishment, it may be after we have crossed oceans, and snows, and sands, in some other part of the *lobe*. *Far from* country and home, in lands of strangers where

no eye may recognise or pity us, but that of the unseen witness of our actions, it follows us in remorse of conscience, or in the judgments of the storm, the siroc, or the ocean. We are amazed that it should be thought that death will arrest this course of things, and that crossing that narrow vale, will do for us what the passage from yesterday to to-day, from youth to age, from the land of our birth to the land of strangers and of solitudes, can never do. Guilty man carries the elements of his own perdition within him, and it matters little whether he be in society or in solitude, in this world or the next—the inward fires will burn, and the sea and the dry land, and the burning climes of hell will send forth their curses to greet the wretched being, who has dared to violate the laws of the unseen God, and to "hail" him as the "new possessor" of the "profoundest hell."

But the infidel still objects that all this is mere probability, and that in concerns so vast, it is unreasonable to act without demonstration. We reply, that in few of the concerns of life do men act from demonstration. The farmer sows with the *probability*, only, that he will reap. The scholar toils with the probability, often a slender one, that his life will be prolonged, and success crown his labours in subsequent life. The merchant commits his treasures to the ocean, embarks perhaps all he has on the bosom of the deep, under the probability that propitious gales will waft the riches of the Indies into port. Under this probability, and this only, the ambitious man pants for honour, the votary of pleasure presses to the scene of dissipation, the youth, the virgin, the man of middle life, and he of hoary hairs, alike crowd round the scenes of honour, of vanity, and of gain. Nay, more, some of the noblest qualities of the soul are brought forth only on the strength of probabilities that appear slight to less daring spirits. In the eye of his countrymen, few things were more improbable than that Columbus would survive the dangers of the deep, and land on the shores of a new hemisphere. Nothing appeared more absurd than his reasonings—nothing more chimerical than his plans. Yet under the pressure of proof that satisfied his own mind, he braved the dangers of an untraversed ocean, and bent his course to regions whose existence was as far from the belief of the old world, as that of heaven is from the faith of the infidel. Nor could the unbelieving Spaniard deny, that under the pressure of the *probability* of the existence of a western continent, some of the highest qualities of mind that the earth has seen, were exhibited by the Genoese navigator —just as the infidel must admit that some of the most firm and noble expressions of soul have come from the enterprise of gaining a heaven and a home, beyond the stormy and untravelled ocean, on which the Christian launches his bark in discovery of a new world. We might add also here, the names of Bruce, of Wallace, of Tell, of Washington. We might remark how they commenced the great enterprises whose triumphant completion has given immortality to their names, under the power of a probability that their efforts would be successful. We might

remark how many *more* clouds of doubt and obscurity clustered around their enterprises, than have ever darkened the Christian's path to heaven, and how the grandest displays of patriotism and prowess that the world has known, have grown out of the hazardous design of rescuing Scotland, Switzerland and America from slavery. But we shall only observe that there was just enough probability of success in these cases to try these men's souls—just as there is probability enough of heaven and hell, to try the souls of infidels and of Christians, to bring out their true character, and answer the great ends of moral government.

But here the infidel acts on the very principle which he condemns. He has not *demonstrated* that his system is true. From the nature of the system he cannot do it. He acts then, on a *probability* that his system *may* prove to be true. And were the subject one *less serious* than eternity, it might be amusing to look at the nature of these probabilities. His system assumes it as probable that men will not be rewarded according to their deeds; that Christianity will turn out to be false; that it will appear that no such being as Jesus lived, or that it will yet be proved that he was an impostor; that twelve men were deceived in so plain a case as that which related to the death and resurrection of an intimate friend; that they conspired to impose on men without reward, contrary to all the acknowledged principles of human action, and when they could reap nothing for their imposture but stripes, contempt, and death; that religion did not early spread over the Roman empire; that the facts of the New Testament are falsehood, and of course that all the cotemporaneous confirmations of these facts collected by the indefatigable Lardner, were false also: that the Jews occupy their place in the nations by chance, and exist in a manner contrary to that of all other people, without reason; that all the predictions of their dispersion, of the coming of the Messiah, of the overthrow of Babylon and Jerusalem and Tyre are conjectures, in which men, very barbarous men, conjectured exactly right, while thousands of the predictions of heathen oracles and statesmen have failed; that this singular fact should have happened, that the most barbarous people should give to mankind the only intelligible notices of God, and that a dozen Galilean peasants should have devised a scheme of imposture to overthrow all the true, and all the false systems of religion in the world. The infidel moreover deems it probable that there is no God; or that death is an eternal sleep; or that we have no souls; or that man is but an improved and educated ape, or that all virtue is vain, that all vice stands on the same level, and may be committed at any man's pleasure; or that man's wisdom is to disregard the future, and live to eat and drink and die; and all this too, when his conscience tells him there is a God, when he *does* act for the future, and expects happiness or woe as the reward of virtue or vice; when he is palsied, as he looks at the grave, with fears of what is beyond, and turns pale in solitude as he looks *onward to* the bar of God. Now we hazard nothing in saying,

that the man who is compelled to act as the infidel is, who has all these probabilities to cheer him with the belief that infidelity is true, and this when it has no system to recommend as truth, and when it stands opposed to all the analogy of things, is engaged in a most singular employment, when he denounces men for acting on the probability that there is a heaven, a God, a Saviour, and a hell. It seems to us that there is nothing more at war with all the noble and pure feelings of the soul, than this attempt to "swing man from his moorings," and send him on wild and tumultuous seas, with only the *infidel's* probability that he will ever reach a haven of rest. It is launching into an ocean, without a belief that there *is* an ocean; and weathering storms, without professing to believe that there *may be* storms; and seeking a port of peace, without believing that there *is* such a port, and acting daily with reference to the future, at the same time that all is pronounced an absurdity. And when we see all this, we ask instinctively, can this be man? Or is this being right after all, in the belief that he is only a semi-barbarous ape, or a half-reclaimed man of the woods?

But we are gravely told, and with an air of great seeming wisdom, that all presumption and experience are against the miraculous facts in the New Testament. And it was, for some time, deemed proof of singular philosophical sagacity in Hume, that he made the discovery, and put it on record to enlighten mankind. For our part, we think far more attention was bestowed on this sophistry than was required; and but for the show of confident wisdom with which it was put forth, we think the argument of Campbell might have been spared. It might safely be admitted, we suppose, that all presumption and experience, *were* against miracles before they were wrought,—and this is no more than saying that they were not wrought before they were. The plain matter of fact, apart from all laboured metaphysics, is, that there is a *presumption* against *most* facts until they actually take place, because till that time all experience was against them. Thus there were many presumptions against the existence of such a man as Julius Cæsar. No man would have ventured to predict that there *would* be such a man. There were a thousand probabilites that a man of that *name* would not live—as many that he would not cross the Rubicon—as many that he would not enslave his country—and as many that he would not be slain by the hand of such a man as Brutus,—and all this was contrary to experience. So there were innumerable improbabilities, in regard to the late Emperor of France. It was once contemplated, we are told, by a living poet who afterwards wrote his life in a different place, to produce a biography grounded on the *improbabilities* of his conduct, and showing how, in fact, all those improbabilities disappeared in the actual result. The world stood in amazement indeed for a few years at the singular grandeur of his movements. Men saw him ride, as the spirit of the storm, on the whirlwind of the revolution; and like the spirit of the *tempest*, amazed and trembling nations

knew not where his power would strike, or what city or state it would next sweep into ruin. But the world has since become familiar with the spectacle,—men have seen that he was naturally engendered by the turbid elements—that he was the proper *creation* of the revolution—and that if *he* had not lived some other master spirit like him would have seized the direction of the tempest, and poured its desolations on bleeding and trembling Europe. So any great discovery in science or art, is previously improbable and contrary to experience. We have often amused ourselves with contemplating what would have been the effect on the mind of Archimedes, had he been told of the power of one of the most common elements,—an element which men who see boiling water must always see—its mighty energy in draining deep pits in the earth, in raising vast rocks of granite, in propelling vessels with a rapidity and beauty of which the ancients knew nothing, and in driving a thousand wheels in the minutest and most delicate works of art. To the ancient world all this was contrary to experience, and all presumption was against it,—as improbable certainly as that God should have power to raise the dead; and we doubt whether any evidence of divine revelation would have convinced mankind three thousand years ago, without the actual experiment, of what the school-boy may now know as a matter of sober an daily occurrence, in the affairs of the world. So not long since, the Copernican system of astronomy was so improbable, that for maintaining it, Galileo endured the pains of the dungeon. All presumption and all experience it was thought were against it. Yet, by the discoveries of Newton, it has been made, to the great mass of mankind, devoid of all its improbabilities, and children acquiesce in its reasonableness. So the oriental king could not be persuaded that water could ever become hard. It was full of improbabilities, and contrary to all experience. The plain matter of fact, is, that in regard to all events in history, and all discoveries in science, and inventions in the mechanic arts, there may be said to be a presumption against their existence, just as there was in regard to miracles; and they are contrary to all experience, until discovered, just as miracles are until performed. And if this be all that infidelity has to affirm in the boasted argument of Hume, it seems to be ushering into the world, with very unnecessary pomp, a very plain truism,—that a new fact in the world is contrary to all experience, and this is the same as saying that a thing is contrary to experience until it actually *is experienced*.

We have another remark to make on this subject. It relates to the *ease* with which the improbabilities of a case may be overcome by testimony. We doubt not that the wonders of the steam power may be now credited by all mankind, and we who have seen its application in so many forms, easily believe that it may accomplish similar wonders in combinations which the world has not yet witnessed. The incredulity of the age of Galileo on the subject of astronomy, has been overcome among

millions who cannot trace the demonstrations of Newton, and who perhaps have never heard his name. It is by *testimony* only that all this is done; and on the strength of this testimony, man will hazard any worldly interest. He will circumnavigate the globe, not at all deterred by the fear that he may find in distant seas or lands, different laws from which the Copernican system supposes. We do not see why, in like manner, the improbabilities of religion may not vanish before testimony; and its high mysteries in some advanced period of our existence, become as familiar to us, as the common facts which are now the subjects of our daily observation. Nor can we see why the antecedent difficulties of religion may not as easily be removed by competent proof, as those which appalled the minds of men in the grandeur of the astronomical system, or the mighty power of the arts.

We wish here briefly to notice another difficulty of infidelity. It is, that it is altogether *improbable* and against the analogy of things, that the Son of God, the equal of the Father of the universe, should stoop to the humiliating scenes of the mediation,—should consent to be cursed, reviled, buffetted, and put to death. We answer, men are very incompetent judges of what a Divine Being may be willing to endure. Who would suppose, beforehand, that *God* would submit to blasphemy and rebuke? Yet what being has been ever more calumniated? Who has been the object of more scorn? What is the daily offering that goes up from the wide world to the Maker of all worlds? Not a nation that does not daily send up a dense cloud of obscenity and profaneness as their offering.

> " The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
> " Shout to each other; and the mountain tops
> " ' From distant mountains catch the flying' curse,
> " Till nation after nation taught the strain,
> " ' Earth rolls the awful malediction round.' "

Scarce a corner of the street can be turned, but our ears are saluted with the sound of blasphemy—curses poured on Jehovah, on his Son, on his Spirit, on his creatures, on the material universe, on his law. To our minds, it is no more strange that the Son of God should bear reproach, and pain, with patience for thirty years, than that the God of creation should bear all this from age to age, and as an offering from the wide world. We have only to reflect on what the blasphemer *would* do if God should be imbodied, and reveal himself to the eye in a form so that human *hands* might reach him with nails, and spears, and mock diadems, to see an illustration of what they actually *did* do, when his Son put himself in the power of blasphemers, and refused not to die. The history of the blasphemer has shown that if he had the *power*, long ago the last gem in the Creator's crown would have been plucked away; his throne would have crumbled beneath him; his sceptre been wrested from his hand; and the God of creation, like his Son in redemption, would have been suspended on a "great central" cross! When we see

the patience of God towards blasphemers, our minds are nev staggered by any condescension in the Redeemer. We s something in the analogy, so unlike what we see among me that we are strongly confirmed in the belief that they are a pa of one great system of things.

We have thus presented a *specimen* of the nature of the arg ment from analogy. Our design has been to excite to inquir and to lead our readers to cultivate a practical acquaintan with this great work. We deem it a work of *principles* in th ology—a work to be appreciated only by those who think f themselves, and who are willing to be at the trouble of carryi out these *materials* for thought into a daily practical applicati to the thousand difficulties, which beset the path of Christians their own private reflections, in the facts which they encounte and in the inuendoes, jibes, and blasphemies of infidels. W know, indeed, that the argument is calculated to *silence* rath than to *convince*. In our view, this is what, on this subject, principally needed. The question in our minds is rather, wh ther we *may* believe there is a future state, than whether v *must* believe it. Sufficient for mortals, we think is it, in the wanderings, their crimes, and their sorrows, if they *may* belie there is a place where the wicked cease from troubling, and t weary may be for ever at rest; and if the thousand shades doubt on that subject which thicken on the path of man, a which assume a deeper hue by infidel arts, *may be* remove We ask only the *privilege* of believing that there is a world purity; that the troubled elements of our chaotic abode m settle down into rest; and that from the heavings of th moving sea there may arise a fair moral system complete in its parts, where God shall be all in all, and where all creatur may admire the beauty of his moral character, and the gra deur of his sovereign control. We watch the progress of th system, much as we may suppose a spectator would ha watched the process of the first creation. At first this no solid globe was a wild chaotic mass. Darkness and commotio were there. There was a vast heaving deep—a boundless co mingling of elements—a dismal terrific wild. Who, in lookin on that moving mass, would have found evidence that t beauty of Eden would so soon start up on its surface, and the fa proportions of our hills, and vales, and streams, would rise give support to millions of animated and happy beings. A with what intensity would the observer behold the light burs ing on chaos—the rush of waters to their deep caverns—t uprising of the hills clothed with verdure, inviting to life an felicity. With what beauty would appear the millions spotti with new-created life in their proper elements. Myriads in th heaving ocean and gushing streams—myriads melodious in th groves—myriads joyful on a thousand hills, and in a thousar vales. How grand the completion of the system—man lord o all, clothed with power over the bursting millions, the *priest* o this new creation, rendering homage to its Great Sovereig

Lord, and "extolling him first, him midst, and him without end." Like beauty and grandeur, we expect will come out of this [illegible] moral system. Our eye loves to trace its developements. With tears we look back on "Paradise Lost"—with [illegible] we trace the unfolding elements of a process that will soon exhibit the beauty and grandeur of "Paradise Regained."

There is still a most important part of the subject untouched—the analogy of the Christian scheme, as we understand it, to the course of nature, and the fact that all the objections urged against *Calvinism* lie against the actual order of events. This part of the argument, Butler has not touched. To this, we propose now to call the attention of our readers—in some respects the most interesting and important part of "the analogy of religion, natural and revealed, to the constitution and course of nature."

Thus far we have had our eye fixed on the infidel. We wish now to direct our attention to the opponents of what we consider the Christian scheme, and inquire whether Butler has not furnished us materials to annihilate every objection against what are called the doctrines of grace. We say *materials*, for we are well aware that he did not complete the argument. We suppose that, had his object been to carry it to its utmost extent, there were two important causes which would have arrested its progress where it actually has stopped. The first is found in Butler's own views of the Christian scheme. We are not calling in question his piety, but we have not seen evidence that he had himself fully embraced the evangelical system, and applied his argument to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. We fear that he stopped short of such a result in his own feelings, and that this may have been the reason why that system had not a more prominent place in his work. Still, we would not apply the language of severe criticism to this deficiency in the Analogy. We know his design. It was to meet the infidelity of an age of peculiar thoughtlessness and vice. He did it. He reared an argument which infidels have thought it most prudent *to let alone*. They have made new attacks in other modes. Driven from this field, they have yielded it into the hands of Butler,—and their wisdom has consisted in withdrawing as silently as possible from the field, and losing the recollection both of the din of conflict and the shame of defeat. It has always been one of the arts of infidelity and error, to *forget* the scene of previous conflict and overthrow. Singular adroitness is manifested in keeping from the public eye the *fact* and the monuments of such disastrous encounters. Thus Butler stands as grand and solitary as a pyramid of Egypt, and we might add, nearly as much forsaken by those for whose benefit he wrote. And thus Edwards on the Will is *conveniently* forgotten by hosts of Arminians, who continue to urge their arguments with as much self-gratulation, as though previous hosts of Arminians had never been prostrated by his mighty arm. Could we awaken the unpleasant reminiscence in the infidels of our age, that there was such a man as

Butler, and in the opposers of the doctrines of grace, that there is extant in the English language such a book, as "A careful inquiry into the modern prevailing notions on the freedom of the Will," we should do more, perhaps, than by any one means to disturb the equanimity of multitudes, who live only to deal out dogmas as if they had never been confuted; and we might hope to arrest the progress of those destructive errors which are spreading in a thousand channels through the land.

The other cause of the deficiency which we notice in the Analogy, is, that it was not possible for Butler, with the statements then made of the doctrines of grace, to carry out his argument, and give it its true bearing on those doctrines. The philosophical principles on which Calvinism had been defended for a century and a half, were substantially those of the schoolmen. The system had started out from darker ages of the world; had been connected with minds of singular strength and power, but also with traits in some degree stern and forbidding. Men had been thrown into desperate mental conflict. They had struggled for mental and civil freedom. They had but little leisure, and less inclination, to polish and adorn—to go into an investigation of the true laws of the mind, and the proper explanation of facts in the moral world—little inclination to look on what was bland and amiable in the government of God. Hence they took the rough-cast system, wielded, in its defence, the ponderous weapons which Augustine and even the Jansenists had furnished them, and prevailed in the conflict; not, however, by the force of their philosophy, but of those decisive declarations of the word of God, with which unhappily that philosophy had become identified. But when they told of imputing the sin of one man to another, and of holding that other to be *personally answerable* for it, it is no wonder that such minds as that of Butler recoiled, for there is nothing like this in nature. When they affirmed, that men have no power to do the will of God, and yet will be damned for not doing what they have no capacity to perform, it is no wonder that he started back, and refused to attempt to find an analogy; for it is unlike the common sense of men. When they told of a limited atonement—of confining the original applicability of the blood of Christ to the elect alone, there *was* no analogy to this, in all the dealings of God towards sinners; in the sun-beam, in the dew, the rain, in running rivulets or oceans; and here Butler must stop, for the analogy could go no further upon the then prevalent notions of theology.

Still, we record with gratitude the achievements of Butler We render our humble tribute of thanksgiving to God, that he raised up a man who has laid the foundation of an argument which *can* be applied to every feature of the Christian scheme. We are not Hutchinsonians, but we believe there is a course of nature most strikingly analogous to the doctrines of revelation. We believe that all the objections which have been urged against the peculiar doctrines of the Christian scheme, lie with equal *weight* against the course of nature itself. and, therefore, really

constitute no objections at all. This point of the argument, Butler has omitted. To a contemplation of the outline of it we now ask the attention of our readers.

We are accustomed, in our ordinary technical theology, to speak much of the *doctrines* of Christianity: and men of system-making minds have talked of them so long, that they seem to understand by them, a sort of intangible and abstract array of propositions, remote from real life and from plain matter of fact. The learner in divinity is often told, that there is a species of daring profaneness, in supposing that they are to be shaped to existing facts, or to the actual operations of moral agents. All this is metaphysics, and the moment he dares to ask whether Turretin or Ridgeley had proper conceptions of the laws of the mind, of moral agency, or of *facts* in the universe, that moment the shades of all antiquity are summoned to come around the adventurous theologian, and charge him with a guilty departure from dogmas long held in the church.

Now we confess we have imbibed somewhat different notions of the *doctrines* of the Bible. We have been accustomed to regard the word as denoting only an authoritative *teaching*, (διδαχὴ, Matt. vii. 28: comp. v. 19; xxii. 33; 2 Tim. iv. 2, 9,) of what *actually exists in the universe*. We consider the whole system of doctrines as simply a statement of *facts*. The doctrine of the Trinity, for example, is a statement of a fact respecting the mode of God's existence. The fact is beyond any investigation of our own minds, and we receive the statement as it is. The doctrine of the mediation is a statement of facts, respecting what Christ did, and taught, and suffered, as given by himself and his followers. So of depravity, so of election or predestination, so of perseverance, so of future happiness and wo. What, then, are the doctrines of Christianity? Simply statements of what *has been*, of what *is*, and what *will be*, in the government of God. In this, every thing is as far as possible from abstraction. There is as little abstraction, (and why may we not add as little sacredness?) in these facts,—we mean sacredness to prevent inquiry into their true nature—as there is in the science of geology, the growth of a vegetable, or the operations of the human intellect. We may add, that in no way has systematic theology rendered more essential disservice to mankind, than in drawing out the life-blood from these great facts—unstringing the nerves, stiffening the muscles, and giving the fixedness of death to them, as the anatomist cuts up the human frame, removes all the elements of life, distends the arteries and veins with wax, and then places it in his room of preparations, as cold and repulsive as are some systems of technical divinity.

In the doctrines of Christianity, as given us in the Bible, we find nothing of this abstract and unreal character. The whole tenor of the Scriptures prepares us to demand, that theology be invariably conformed to the laws of the mind, and the actual economy of the moral and material universe. The changes which have taken place in orthodox systems of divinity since the

era of the reformation, have been chiefly owing to the changes in the system of mental and moral science. Whenever that system shall be fully understood, and established on the immovable foundation of truth, all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, will be of one mind in their *mode* of stating the doctrines of the gospel, as they already are in their spiritual feelings. *Till* then, all that can be done by the friends of truth will be to show, that the objections which are urged against the doctrines of grace, can be urged with equal power, against all the facts in God's moral government.

From the beginning, formidable objections have been brought against what are called the Doctrines of Grace, or the Evangelical System, or Calvinism. These objections have seldom, if ever, been drawn from the Bible. Their strength has consisted in the alleged fact, that these doctrines are in opposition to the established principles, by which God governs the world. We concede, that there is just enough of apparent irregularity in those principles, to make these objections plausible with the great mass of men, just as there was enough of irregularity and improbability in the Copernican system of astronomy, to make it for a long time liable to many and plausible objections. Certain appearances strongly favoured the old doctrine, that the sun, moon, and stars travelled, in marshalled hosts, around our insignificant orb, just as, in the Arminian system, certain appearances may seem to indicate that man is the centre of the system, and that God, and all the hosts of heaven, live and act chiefly to minister to his comfort. But it is *now* clear, that all the proper facts in astronomy go to prove, that the earth is a small part of the plan, and to confirm the system of Copernicus. So we affirm that the Calvinistic scheme—despite all Arminian appearances, is the plan on which this world is actually governed; and that all the objections that have been urged against it are urged against facts that are fixed in the very nature of things. And we affirm that a mind which could take in *all* these facts, could make up the Calvinistic scheme without the aid of revelation, from the actual course of events; just as in the ruins of an ancient city the skilful architect can discern in the broken fragments, pillars of just dimensions, arches of proper proportions, and the remains of edifices of symmetry and grandeur.

In entering on this subject, however, we cannot but remark, that the Evangelical Scheme is often held answerable for that which it did not originate. We mean, that when opposers approach the Christian system, they almost universally hold it responsible for the *fall*, as well as the *recovery*, of man. They are not willing to consider, that it is a scheme proposed to *remedy an existing state of evil*. Christianity did not plunge men into sin. It is the system by which men are to be recovered from wo—wo which would have existed to quite as great an extent, certainly, if the conception of the evangelical system had never entered the divine mind. The theory and practice of medicine *is not to* be held answerable for the fact that man is subject to

disease and death. It *finds* men thus subject; and all that can be justly required of the art, is that to which it makes pretensions, viz. that it can do *something* towards removing or alleviating human suffering. So in Christianity. That men are *in fact* in the midst of sin, suffering, and death, is undeniable. The doctrine is common to the deist, the atheist, and the Christian. For that Christianity is not answerable. It proposes a remedy, and that remedy is properly the Christian system. Still we shall not, in our present discussion, avail ourselves of this very obvious remark; but shall proceed to notice the objections to the entire series of revealed facts, as if they constituted one system:—and the rather as the evangelical system proposes a statement respecting the exact *extent* of the evil, which has an important bearing on the features of the remedy proposed.

1. The first fact, then, presented for our examination is *the fall of man*. The Scriptures affirm that a solitary act—an act in itself exceedingly unimportant—was the beginning of that long train of sin and wretchedness, which has passed upon our world. Now, we acknowledge that to all the mystery and fearfulness of this fact our bosoms beat with a full response to that of the objector. *We* do not understand the reason of it; and what is of more consequence to us and to the objector is, that *an explanation of this mystery, forms no part of the system of revelation*. The only inquiry at present before us, is, whether the fact in question is so separated from all other events, as to be expressly contradicted by the analogy of nature.

We know there has been a theory, which affirms that we are *one* with Adam—that we so existed in his loins, as to *act* with him—that our *wills* concurred with *his* will—that his action was strictly and properly ours—and that we are held answerable at the bar of justice for that deed, just as A. B. at fifty is responsible for the deed of A. B. at twelve. In other words, that the act of Adam, involving us all in ruin, is taken out of all ordinary laws by which God governs the world, and made to stand by itself, as incapable of any illustration from analogy, and as mocking any attempt to defend it by reasoning. With this theory, we confess we have no sympathy; and we shall dismiss it with saying, that in our view, Christianity never teaches that men are responsible for any sin but their own; nor can they be guilty, or held liable to *punishment*, in the proper sense of that term, for conduct other than that which has grown out of their own wills. Indeed we see not how, if it were a dogma of a pretended revelation, that God might at pleasure, and by an arbitrary decree, make crime pass from one individual to another—striking onward from age to age, and reaching downward to "the last season of recorded time,"—punished in the original offender; repunished in his children; and punished again and again, by infinite multiples, in countless ages and individuals—and all this judicial infliction, for a single act, performed cycles of ages before the individuals lived, we see not how any evidence could shake *our intrinsic belief* that this is unjust and improbable.

We confess we have imbibed other views of justice; and we believe that he who can find the head and members of this theory in the Bible, will have no difficulty in finding there any of the dogmas of the darkest night that ever settled on the church.

But, that the *consequences* or *results* of an action may pass over from one individual to another, and affect the condition of unborn generations, we hold to be a doctrine of the sacred Scriptures, and to be fully sustained by the analogy of nature.* And no one who looks at the scriptural account of the fall and recovery of man, can doubt that it is a cardinal point in the system. We affirm that it is a doctrine fully sustained by the course of events around us. Indeed the fact is so common, that we should be exhausting the patience of our readers by attempting to draw out formal instances. Who is ignorant of the progressive and descending doom of the drunkard? Who is stranger to the common fact, that his intemperance wastes the property which was necessary to save a wife and children from beggary— that *his* appetite may be the cause of his family's being despised, illiterate and ruined; that the vices which follow in the train of his intemperance, often encompass his offspring, and that they too are profane, unprincipled, idle, and loathsome? So of the murderer, the thief, the highwayman, the adulterer. The result of their conduct rarely terminates with themselves. They are lost to society, and their children are lost with them. Nor does the evil stop here. Not merely are the *external* circumstances of the child affected by the misdeeds of a parent, but there is often a dark suspicion resting upon his very soul, there is felt to be in him a hereditary presumptive tendency to crime, which can be removed only by a long course of virtuous conduct, and which even then the slightest circumstance re-excites. Is an illegitimate child to blame for the aberration of a mother? Yet who is ignorant of the fact that, in very few conditions of society, such a son is placed on a level with the issue of lawful wedlock? So the world over, we approach the son of the drunkard, the murderer, and the traitor, with all these terrible suspicions. The father's deeds shut our doors against him. Nor can he be raised to the level of his former state, but by a long course of purity and well-doing. Now in all these cases, we see a general course of things in Divine Providence, corresponding, in important respects, to the case of Adam and his descendants. We do not deem the child guilty, or ill-deserving, *but society is so organized, and sin is so great an evil, that the proper effects cannot be seen, and the proper terror be infused into the mind to deter from it, without such an organization.* It is true that these results do not take place with undeviating certainty. It is not *always* the case that the

* Rom. v. 12—19; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 49; Josh. vii. 24, 25; Ex. xvii. 16, 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3; Matt. xxiii. 35. This view is by no means confined to revelation. The ancient heathen long since observed it, and regarded it as the great principle on which the world was governed. Thus Hesiod says, πολλακι και ξυμπαδα πολις κακου ανδρος εσαυρου: And Horace says, Quicquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi.

l of a drunkard is intemperate, idle, or illiterate; while it is ıys the case, that a descendant of Adam is a sinner. In the ıer case, there may be other laws of government to prevent regular operations of the plan. In the latter, God has not fit wholly to interrupt the regular process in a single ınce. Even when men are renewed—as the child of the ıkard may be removed from the regular curse of the parent's luct—the renewed man still is imperfect, and still suffers and death.

ut, we know, there is an appearance of much that is formi- e in the difficulty, that a single act, and that a most unim- ant one, should result in so many crimes and calamities. the objection, as we have seen, lies against the course of re, as truly as against the revealed facts resulting from the ıexion of Adam and his descendants. To lessen the objec- we would further remark, that it is not the outward form of ction which determines its character and results. The blow :h in self-defence strikes a highwayman to the earth, may the same physical qualities, as that which reached the t of the venerable White of Salem. It is the *circumstances*, attendants, the relations, the links that bind the deed to rs, which determine the character of the action. Adam's ıad this towering preeminence, that it was the *first* in the ly created globe, and committed by the first of mortals; the pective father of immense multitudes. In looking at it, , we are to turn from the mere physical act, to run the eye g the conduct of his descendants, and to see if we can find other deeds that shall be *first* in a series, and then to mark r results, and in them we shall find the proper analogy. Now evident, that here we shall find no other act that will have same awful peculiarity as the deed of our first father. But there no acts that can be set over against this, to illustrate ınhappy consequences? We look, then, at the deed of a man igh standing whose character has been blameless, and whose :stry has been noble. We suppose him, in an evil moment, sten to temptation, to fall into the wiles of the profligate, or ı to become a traitor to his country. Now who does not see the fact of this being a *first* and characteristic deed, may il deeper misery on his friends, and stain the escutcheon of family with a broader and fouler blot? Or take an instance :h approaches still nearer to the circumstances of our first nts' crime. One false step, the first in a before virtuous ıle of honourable parentage, and high standing, spreads sack- ı and wo over entire families, and sends the curse prolonged into advancing years. It needs no remark to show how h that deed may differ in its results, from any subsequent of profligacy in that individual. The *first* act has spread ruing throughout every circle of friends. Lost now to vir- and disowned by friends, the subsequent conduct may be rded *as in character*, and the results terminate only in the ıding individual. It is impossible here not to recur to the

melancholy case of Dr. Dodd. His crime differed not fro
acts of forgery except in his circumstances. It was a *fi*
the deed of a man of distinction, of supposed piety, of a p
high profession, and the deed stood out with a dread
eminence in the eyes of the world; nor could the purit
profession, nor the eloquence of Johnson, nor the voice c
thousand petitioners, nor the native compassion of Geo
save him from the tremendous malediction of the law—
as conspicuous as the offence was primary and eminent.

We think from this peculiarity of a first offence, we c
many of the objections which men allege against the d
of revelation, on the subject. If further illustration were
we might speak of the opposite, and advert to the well
fact, that a first distinguished act in a progenitor may r
the lasting good of those connected with him by the ties
dred or of law. Who can reflect without emotion on tl
deed by which Columbus discovered the western world,
glory it has shed on his family, and the interest which in
quence of it has arisen at the very name, and which we
any mortal that is connected with him? Who can re
without deep feeling, the philanthropy of Howard, and the
less lustre which his benevolence has thrown over his fan
his name? Who thinks of the family of Washington
some deep emotion, running back to the illustrious man
glory has shed its radiance around Mount Vernon, aro
family, around our capital, and over all our battle-fields,
the millions of whom he was the constituted political
There is a peculiarity in the great first deed which sheds
on all that, by any laws of association, can be connected v
Compared with other deeds, having perhaps the same l
dimensions, it is like the lustre of the sun diffusing his
over all the planets, when contrasted with the borrowed, r
rays of the moon which shines upon our little globe.

Now we think there is an analogy between these ca
that of Adam, because we think it is a fixed principle i
as in natural legislation, that the same law is applicabl
same facts. We find a series of facts on the earth, and
lar series in the movement of the planets, and we have
term to express the whole—gravitation. We deem it u
sophical to suppose the nature is there, in the same fac
jected to different laws, from what passes before our ow
So when we find one uniform process in regard to mo
duct—when we find *results*, *consequences* and not *crimes*
ling from father to son, and holding on their unbroken
distant ages, why should we hesitate to admit, that to
extent, at least, the facts respecting Adam and his desc
fall under the same great law of divine providence? We
here deny, that there may have been beyond this a peculi
the case of Adam, which must be referred to the decis
divine wisdom, and justified on other principles than thos
known analogy. But we never can adopt that system

les on all the analogies which actually exist, and holds
) be personally *answerable*, and actually *punished* by a just
or an act committed thousands of years before they were
Such a doctrine is no where to be found in the scriptures.
is the result of this act of Adam, Christianity affirms that
s depraved. It has marked the character and extent of
pravity, with a particularity which we wonder has ever
alled into debate.* It affirms that man is by nature des-
of holiness, and it is on the ground of this fact that the
ian scheme was necessary. There is one great principle
g through the whole of this scheme, which renders it
t is, viz.—*the appointment of a Mediator*. It regards man
allen, and so helpless, that but for an extraordinary inter-
n—the appointment of some being that should interpose
, it was impossible that any native elasticity in the human
s or will, or any device which human ingenuity might fall
ould raise him up, and restore him to the favour of God.
he thing which most manifestly characterizes this sys-
the doctrine of *substitution*—or the fact that Jesus Christ
or others, toiled for others, and died for others; or, in other
that God bestows upon us pardon and life in consequence
at his Son has done and suffered in our stead.† The
rity which distinguishes this system from all others, is,
an does not approach his Maker *directly*, but only through
nement of the Son of God.
v in recurring to the analogy of nature, we have only to
hether calamities which are hastening to fall on us, are
ut back by the intervention of another? Are there any
n which either our own crimes or the manifest judgments
l, are bringing ruin upon us, where that ruin is turned
y the interposition of others? Now we at once cast our
ackward to all the helpless and dangerous periods of our
Did God come forth *directly*, and protect us in the
eless period of infancy? Who watched over the sleep of
idle, and guarded us in sickness and helplessness? It was
derness of a mother bending over our slumbering child-
foregoing sleep, and rest, and ease, and hailing toil and
at *we* might be defended. Why then is it strange, that
God thus ushers us into existence through the pain and
another, that he should convey the blessings of a higher
ce by the groans and pangs of a higher mediator? God
s knowledge. But does he come forth to teach us by
tion, or guide us by his own hand to the fountains of
n? It is by years of patient toil in others, that we pos-
e elements of science, the principles of morals, the endow-
of religion. He gives us food and raiment. Is the
Parent of Benevolence seen clothing us by his own hand,

m. i. 21—32; iii. 10—19; v. 12; viii. 6, 7. Gen. viii. 21. Ps. xiv
Eph. ii. 1—3. 1 John v. 19. John iii. 1—6.
n i. 29. Eph. v. 2. 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10. Isa. liii. 4. Rom. iii
2 Cor. v. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 21.

or ministering directly to our wants? Who makes provisions for the sons and daughters of feebleness, or gaiety, or idleness? Who but the care-worn and anxious father and mother, who toil that their offspring may receive these benefits from their hands. Why then may not the garments of salvation, and the manna of life, come through a higher mediator, and be the fruit of severer toil and sufferings? Heaven's highest, richest, benefits are thus conveyed to the race through thousands of hands acting as *mediums* between man and God. It is thus, through the instrumentality of others, that the Great Giver of life breathes health into our bodies and vigour into our frames. And why should he not reach also the sick and weary *mind*—the soul languishing under a long and wretched disease, by the hand of a mediator? Why should he not kindle the glow of spiritual health on the wan cheek, and infuse celestial life into our veins, by him who is the great physician of souls? The very earth, air, waters, are all channels for conveying blessings to us from God. Why then should the infidel stand back, and all sinners frown, when we claim the same thing in redemption, and affirm that, in this great concern, "there is *one* mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all."

But still it may be said, that this is not an *atonement*. We admit it. We maintain only that it vindicates the main principle of the atonement, and shows that it is according to a *general law*, that God imparts spiritual blessings to us through a mediator. What we ask is the precise objectionable point in the atonement, if it be not, that God aids us in our sins and woes, by the self-denial and sufferings of another? And we ask, whether there is any thing so peculiar in such a system, as to make it intrinsically absurd and incredible? Now we think there is nothing more universal and indisputable than a system of nature like this. God has made the whole animal world tributary to man. And it is by the toil and pain of creation, that our wants are supplied, our appetites gratified, our bodies sustained, our sickness alleviated—that is, the impending evils of labour, famine, or disease are put away by these substituted toils and privations. By the blood of patriots he gives us the blessings of liberty,—that is, by *their* sufferings in our defence we are delivered from the miseries of rapine, murder, or slavery, which might have encompassed our dwellings. The toil of a father, is the price by which a son is saved from ignorance, depravity, want, or death. The tears of a mother, and her long watchfulness, save from the perils of infancy, and an early death. Friend aids friend by toil; a parent foregoes rest for a child; and the patriot pours out his blood on the altars of freedom, that *others* may enjoy the blessings of liberty—that is, that others may not be doomed to slavery, want, and death.

Yet still it may be said, that we have not come, in the analogy, to the precise point of the atonement, in producing *reconciliation* with God by the sufferings of another. We ask, then, what is

the scripture account of the effect of the atonement in producing reconciliation? Man is justly exposed to suffering. He is guilty, and it is the righteous purpose of God that the guilty should suffer. God is *so* opposed to him that he will inflict suffering on him, unless by an atonement it is prevented. By the intervention of the atonement, therefore, the scriptures affirm that such sufferings shall be averted. The man shall be saved from the impending calamity. Sufficient for all the purposes of justice, and of just government, has fallen on the substitute, and the sinner may be pardoned and reconciled to God. Now, we affirm, that in every instance of the substituted sufferings, or self-denial of the parent, the patriot, or the benefactor, there occurs a state of things so analogous to this, as to show that it is in strict accordance with the just government of God, and to remove all the objections to the peculiarity of the atonement. Over a helpless babe—ushered into the world, naked feeble, speechless, there impends hunger, cold, sickness, sudden death—a mother's watchfulness averts these evils. Over a nation impend revolutions, sword, famine, and the pestilence. The blood of the patriot averts these, and the nation smiles in peace. Look at a particular instance. Xerxes poured his millions on the shores of Greece. The vast host darkened all the plains, and stretched towards the capitol. In the train there followed weeping, blood, conflagration, and the loss of liberty. Leonidas almost alone, stood in his path. He fought. Who can calculate the effects of the valour and blood of that single man and his compatriots in averting calamities from Greece, and from other nations struggling in the cause of freedom? Who can tell how much of rapine, of cruelty, and of groans and tears it turned away from that nation?

Now we by no means affirm that this is *all* that is meant by an atonement, as revealed by Christianity. We affirm only, that there is a sufficient similarity in the two cases, to remove the points of objection to an atonement, made by the infidel,—to show that reconciliation by the sufferings of another, or a putting away evils by the intervention of a mediator, is not a violation of the analogies of the natural and moral world. Indeed we should have thought it an argument for the rejection of a system, if it had not contemplated the removal of evils by the toils and pains of substitution. We maintain that the system of the Unitarians which denies all such substitution, is a violation of all the modes in which God has yet dispensed his blessings to men In the nature of the case, there is all the antecedent presumption there *could* be, that, if God intended to confer saving blessings on mankind, it would be, by the interposition of the toils, groans, and blood, of a common mediating friend. The well known case of the king of the Locrians, is only an instance of the way in which reconciliation is to be brought about among men. He made a law that the adulterer should be punished with the loss of his eyes. His son was the first offender. The feelings of the *father* and the justice of the *king* conflicted

Reconciliation was produced by suffering the loss of one e himself, and inflicting the remainder of the penalty on his so

But still, there are two points in the atonement so well su stantiated, and yet apparently contradictory, that it becomes a interesting inquiry, whether *both* positions can find an analogy the course of events. The first is, that the atonement was origi al'y applicable to all men—that it was not limited by its natu to any class of men, or any particular individuals—that it w an offering made for the race,* and is, when made, in the wide and fullest sense, the property of man; and the second is, that is actually applied to only a portion of the race, and that it w the purpose of God that it should be so applied.†

Now in regard to the first aspect of the atonement suggeste we can no more doubt that it had this original universal app cability, than we can any of the plainest propositions of t Bible. If this is not clear, nothing *can* be clear in the use of t Greek and English tongues—and we discern in this, we think, strict accordance with the ordinary provisions which God h made for man. We look at any of his gifts—from the smalle that makes life comfortable, to the richest in redemption, and w shall not find one, that *in its nature*, is limited in its applicabili to any class of individuals. The sun on which we look she his rays on all—on all alike; the air we breathe has an origin adaptation to all who may inhale it, and is ample for the want c any number of millions. From the light of the feeblest star, t full-orbed day; from the smallest dew drop, to the mountai torrent; from the blushing violet, to the far scented magnolia there is an original applicability of the gifts of providence to a the race: they are fitted to *man as man*, and the grandeur o God's beneficence appears in spreading the earth with fruits an flowers, making it one wide garden, in place of the straitene paradise that was lost. We might defy the most acute defende of the doctrine of limited atonement, to produce an instance i the provisions of God, where there was a designed limitation i the nature of the thing. We shall be slow to believe that Go has not a *uniform plan* in his mode of governing men.

But still it will be asked, what is the use of a universal atone ment, if it is not actually applied to all? Does God work i vain? Or would he make a provision in the dying groans o his Son, that was to be useless to the universe? We migl say here, that in our view, there is no waste of this provision,- that the sufferings which were requisite for the race, were onl those which were demanded in behalf of a single individual and that we are ignorant of the way of applying guages an decimal admeasurements and pecuniary computations to a gran moral transaction. But we reply, that it is according to God way of doing things, that many of his provisions should appe to *us* to be vain. We see in this, the hand of the same Gc

*2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 John ii. 2. Heb. ii. 9. John iii. 16,17; vi. 51. 2 Pet. ii.
†Isa. liii. 10. John xvii. 2. Eph. i. 3—11. Rom. viii. 29, 30; i *15—24. John* vi. 37, 39. 2 Tim. i. ix.

that pours the rays of noon-day on barren sands, and genial showers on desert rocks, where no man is—to *our* eye, though not to *his*, in vain. Who knows not that the sun sheds his daily beams on half the globe covered with trackless waters; and around thousands of dungeons where groans in darkness the prisoner? But some Solon or Cadmus may yet cross these oceans, to bear law and letters to the barbarian; some Howard to pity and relieve the sufferer; some Xavier or Vanderkemp to tell benighted men of the dying and risen Son of God. So we say of the atonement. It is *not* useless. Other ages shall open their eyes upon this sun of righteousness; shall wash in this open fountain; shall pluck the fruit from this tree of life; shall apply for healing to the balm of Gilead and find a physician there.

But still it was the purpose—the decree of God, that this atonement should be *actually* applied to but a part—we believe ultimately *a large part* of the human family. By this we mean, that it is *in fact* so applied, and that *this fact* is the expression of the purpose or decree in God. So it is with all the objects we have mentioned. Food is not given to all. Health is not the inheritance of all. Liberty, peace, and wealth, are diffused unequally among men. We interpret the decrees of God, so far as we can do it, *by facts;* and we say that the actual *result*, by whatever means brought about, is the expression of the *design* of God. Nor can any man doubt, that the dissemination of these blessings is to be traced to the ordering of God. Is it owing to any act of man, that the bark of Peru was so long unknown, or that the silver of Potosi slept for ages unseen by any human eye? Is there not evidence, that it was according to the good pleasure of the Giver, that the favour should not be bestowed on men till Columbus crossed the main, and laid open the treasures and the *materia medica* of the west, to an avaricious and an afflicted world? We are here struck with another important analogy *in the manner* in which God's plans are developed. Who would have imagined that so important a matter as the discovery of a new world, should have depended on the false reasonings and fancy of an obscure Genoese? Who would have thought that all the wealth of Potosi, should have depended for its discovery, on so unimportant a circumstance, as an Indian's pulling up a shrub by accident in hunting a deer? So in the redemption of man,—in the applicability of the atonement. Who is ignorant that the reformation originated in the private thoughts of an obscure man in a monastery. A Latin Bible fallen on as accidentally, and a treasure as much unknown, as Hualpi's discovery of the mines of Potosi, led the way to the most glorious series of events since the days of the apostles.

But it is still said, that it is unreasonable for men to *suffer* in consequence of not being put in possession of the universal atonement; and that Christianity affirms there is no hope of salvation but in the Son of God.* So it does. But the affirmation is not that men are *guilty* for not being acquainted with that

* Acts iv. 12.

scheme, but that they lie under the curses of the *antecedent state* before mentioned, from which Christianity came to deliver. The Hindoo suffers and dies under the rage of a burning fever. The fault is not that he is ignorant of the virtues of quinine, nor is he punished for this ignorance of its healing qualities; but he is lying under the operation of the previous state of things, from which medicine contemplates his rescue. Half the world are shut out from benefits, which they might enjoy by being made acquainted with the provisions for their help. Their sufferings are not a *punishment* for this want of knowledge. They are the operation of the system from which they might be delivered by the provisions made for their welfare. How much suffering might have been saved, had Jenner lived a century earlier. Is it contrary then to the analogy of nature, to suppose that men may suffer in consequence of the want of the gospel, and even that in eternity they may continue under the operation of that *previous* state of things, to which the gospel has never been applied to relieve them? He who opposes Christianity because it implies that man may suffer if its healing balm is not applied, knows not what he says, nor whereof he affirms. He is scoffing at the analogy of the world, and calling in question the wisdom of all the provisions of God to aid suffering man.

3. On the ground of man's depravity, and of the necessity of an atonement for sin, the gospel declares that without a change of heart and life, none can be saved.* It affirms that contrition for past sins, and confidence in the Son of God, are indispensable for admission to heaven. Now we scarce know of any point on which men so reluctate as they do here. That so sudden, thorough, and permanent a revolution should be demanded, that is should be founded on things so unmeaning as repentance and faith, that all men *can* enjoy or suffer for ever should result from a change like this, they deem a violation of every principle of justice. And yet, perhaps, there is no doctrine of revelation which is more strongly favoured by the analogy of nature. Can any one doubt that men often experience a sudden and most important revolution of feeling and purpose? We refer not here to a change in religion, but in regard to the principles and the actions of common life? Who is ignorant that from infancy to old age, the mind passes through many revolutions—that as we leave the confines of one condition of our being, and advance to another, a change, an entire change, becomes indispensable, or the whole possibility of benefitting ourselves by the new condition is lost. He who carries with him into youth the playfulness and follies of childhood, who spends that season of his life in building houses with cards, or in trundling a hoop, is characterized by weakness, and *must* lose all the benefits appropriate to that new period of existence. He who goes into middle life with a "bosom that carries anger as the flint bears fire"—who has not suffered his passions to cool, and his mental frame to become fixed in the compactness of mature and vigorous life

* John iii. 3, 5, 36. Mark xvi. 16.

gives a pledge that the bar, the bench, or the desk—the counting-room, the office, or the plough, have little demand for *his* services, and that his hopes will be for ever blasted. The truth is, that at the beginning of each of these periods, there was a *change* demanded—that on that change depended all that followed in the next succeeding, perhaps in every succeeding period, and that, when the change does not exist, the period is characterized by folly, indolence, ignominy, or vice. The same remark might be extended to old age, and to all the new circumstances in which men may by placed. We ask, then, why some revolutions similar *in results*—we mean not in nature—should not take place in reference to the passage from time to eternity?

But our argument is designed to bear on the great moral change called *regeneration*. Now no fact, we think, is more common, than that men often undergo a complete transformation in their moral character. It would be difficult to meet, in the most casual and transitory manner, with any individual, who could not remark that his own life had been the subject of many similar revolutions, and that each change fixed the character of the subsequent period of his existence. At one period he was virtuous. Then temptation crossed his path—and the description which we would have given of him yesterday, would by no means suit him to-day. Or at one time, he was profligate, profane, unprincipled. By some process, of which he could perhaps scarce give an account, he became a different man. It might have been gradual—the result of long thought,—of many resolutions, made and broken,—of many appeals, of much weeping, and of many efforts to break away from his companions. Now, what it is important for us to remark is, that *this change* has given birth to a new course of life, has initiated him into a new companionship, and has *itself* fixed all the joys or sorrows of the coming period. Such revolutions in character seem like the journeyings of the Arabian, wandering, he knows scarcely whither, without compass, comfort, or food, till in his progress he comes to a few spreading *oases* in the desert. His reaching this paradise in the wide waste of sand, decides of course the nature of his enjoyments till he has crossed it, and secures a release from the perils of the burning desert. In human life, we have often marked an ascent to some such spot of living green: we have seen the profligate youth leaving the scene of dissipation, and treading with a light heart and quick step the path of virtue, beside cool living streams and beneath refreshing bowers. Christianity affirms that a similar change is indispensable before man can tread the broad and peaceful plains of the skies. And it affirms that such a change will fix the condition of *all that new state of being*,—or, in other words, will secure an eternal abode beneath the tree of life, and fast by the river of God. We wait to learn that, in this, religion has made any strange or unreasonable demand.

It is a further difficulty in Christianity, that it should make such amazing bliss or woe dependent on things of apparently so

little consequence as repentance and faith. We shall not her attempt to show the philosophy of this, or even to set up a vindi cation. We affirm only that man's whole condition in this lif often depends on changes as minute, apparently as unphiloso phical, and as unimportant. What is seemingly of less conse quence in our view, when we tread the vale of years, than th change from infancy to childhood—and again to boyhood—an then even to manhood—a change from one unimportant object t another? What is often apparently a matter of less magnitud than for a young man to withdraw from some haunt of pleasur —a thing requiring but little resolution, but it may be stretchin in its results to all his coming life? A change of an opinion or a habit, or a companion, may be often a most unimportan circumstance; and yet it may determine one's character for th entire life. It is recorded of Paley, one of the acutest and mos powerful men of the Christian church, that he was, when i college, idle, and a spendthrift. One morning a rich and dissi pated fellow student came into his room with this singula reproof. "Paley, I have been thinking what a fool you are. have the means of dissipation, and can afford to be idle. *You* are poor and cannot afford it. *I* should make nothing if I wer to apply myself. *You* are capable of rising to eminence,—and pressed with this truth, I have been kept awake during the whol night, and have now come solemnly to admonish you." To thi singular admonition, and to the change consequent upon it Paley owes his eminence, and the church some of the ables defences of the truth of religion. Now who, beforehand, woul have thought of suspending the labours of such a man, perhap his eternal destiny, and so many of the proofs of Christianity, o a change wrought in a manner so singular and surprising. If as no one can deny, man's doom in this life may depend o revolutions of such a nature, we are ignorant of any reason wh the doom of another state may not be fixed by a similar law.

Perhaps the doctrine which has appeared to most infidel entirely unmeaning and arbitrary, is that which demands *faith* as the condition of salvation. Repentance is a doctrine of more obvious fitness. But the demand of faith seems to be an arbi trary and unmeaning appointment. And yet we think it indu bitable, that on man's *belief* depends his whole conduct and des tiny in this life. What enterprise would have been mor unwise than that of Columbus, if he had not had a *belief* that b stretching along to the west, he might reach the Indies? Wha more foolish than the conduct of Tell, and Wallace, and Wash ington, if not sustained by a persuasion that their country migh be free? What more mad than the toils of the young man bend ing his powers to the acquisition of learning, if he were not sus tained by *faith* in some yet unpossessed honour or emolument What more frantic than for the merchant to commit his treasure to the deep, if he did not *believe* that prosperous gales would re waft the vessel, laden with riches, into port? We might als say that *faith*, or *confidence* in others, is demanded in every ente

it man ever undertook, and is the grand principle which
s it to a happy result. We need only ask what would be
lition of a child, without faith or confidence in a parent;
oil, without reliance on the abilities of his teacher; of a
distrusting the sovereign; of a soldier, doubting the skill
ess of his commander; of a tradesman, with no reliance
e whom he employs? What would be the condition of
cial transactions, if there were no established confidence
men of different nations? What the condition of arts,
rms, if this great pervading principle were at once cut
all these instances, moreover, this principle of faith is
x and *measure* of the aid to be expected from others. Is
ew principle that the child which has no confidence in a
usually fails of his favour; or that the pupil should fail
fit, if he doubts the qualifications of his teacher? And
ny single desolating blow so cripple all enterprises, and
ch ruin into the political, the military, and the commer-
rld, as to destroy the *faith* which one man reposes in
? Is it then a strange and unknown doctrine, when reli-
ys that the most important benefits are suspended on
Is it any thing more than one instance of a general
e, which confers peace and wealth on children; learning
scholar; success on the tradesman; liberty on those who
for it; and even laurels and crowns on those who pant
ace for honour and in the conflicts of war. We do not
strange, therefore, that God should have incorporated
o a scheme of religion; and proclaimed from pole to pole
who has no confidence in counsellors and guides, shall
out the benefit of counsel and guidance; and that he who
confidence in the Son of God, shall be dissociated from
benefits of his atonement.

t be remembered, also, that the faith which is demanded
business of life, is very often reposed in some persons
ve have never seen. How few subjects of any empire
er seen the monarch by whom they are governed? Nay,
the man who holds our destiny in his hand may be on
r side of the globe. Under his charge may be the pro-
hich we embarked on the bosom of the deep; or, it may
son whom we have committed to him for instruction.
ins may rise, or oceans roll their billows for ever to
us; but the bonds of faith may be unsevered by the
snows, unscathed by the most burning sun, and unbroken
l the rude heavings of ocean, and the shocks of nations.
, why may not a similar band stretch toward heaven, and
to the throne of the Eternal King? Is it more absurd
hould place my confidence in the unseen monarch of the
hom I have not seen, than that my neighbour should
liance on the king of the celestial empire, or of Britain,
awaii, alike unseen by him?

here is an amazing stupidity among men on the subject
ion, and it cannot be, we are told, that God should make

eternal life dependent on matters in which men feel so
interest. We might reply to this, that it is not the fault of
that men are so indifferent. He has done enough to arouse tl
If the thunders of his law, the revelation of his love in red
tion, and the announcement that there is a heaven and a
are not adequate to arouse the faculties of man, we know
what further could be demanded. God has no other syste
wrath to bear on human spirits; and heaven and hell imb
no other topics of appeal. But we reply further, that no fa
more familiar to us than that all men's interests in life suff
want of sufficient solicitude concerning them. By mere l
lessness, a man may stumble down a precipice,—nor will
severity of the fall be mitigated by any plea that he was thou
less of his danger. Thousands of estates have been wrecke
want of timely attention. Character is often ruined, by
of proper solicitude in selecting companions. Nay, the kin
terrors comes into our dwellings, perfectly unmoved by
inquiry whether we were awaiting his approach or not;
stands over our beds, and wields his dart, and chills our
blood, with as much coolness and certainty as if we were
ing the closest attention to the evidences of his approach.
why should we expect that mere *indifference*, or want of anx
should avert the consequences of crime in the eternal worl

It is also, we think, an undoubted doctrine of the Chris
scheme, that the great change required in man is the wor
God.* And it is no small difficulty with the infidel, tha
important results are dependent on a change which owe
existence to the will of a distant being. Yet we cannot be in
sible to the fact that *all* our mercies hang on the will of
great, invisible God. When we say that the salubrity of the
the wholesomeness of water, the nutrition of plants, and the l
ing power of medicine, all owe their efficacy to his will, we
stating a fact which physiology is at last coming to see
acknowledge. At all events, man does not feel himself st
ened in obligation or in effort by the fact that the *success* o
exertions depends on causes unseen and unknown? All
atheists acknowledge that health flows through the fram
man because God is its giver. Infancy puts on strength
walks; childhood advances to youth; man rises from a be
sickness; or fractured limbs again become compact, because
sits in the heavens, and sends down his influence to rea
strengthen, and to heal. Yet, does any one hesitate to put
his energy for wealth, or his kindness to his children; to
medicine, or to set a bone, because all these will be ineffica
without the blessing of God? But in all this He is as invis
and, for aught that Christianity teaches to the contrary, as
efficient, as in the work of saving men. And against all
tion in these matters, lie the same objections that are u
against effects in religion.

* John i. 13; iii. 5, 8; Rom. ix. 16, 18; Eph. ii. 1; 1 Peter i. 3; 1
v 1; Ezek. xi. 19; John vi. 44, 45.

lor do we deem the doctrine that man may be changed sud-
ly, and by an influence *originating from some other source than
own mind*, at variance with the analogy of nature. We have
ady spoken of the fact, that sudden changes often take place
he minds of men; and that it is a doctrine of the Scriptures,
t such a change is indispensable to an admission into heaven.
now proceed to remark, that such revolutions often bear the
ks of being brought about by an external, and often an invi-
e, agency; and that there *are* revolutions where it is not
hilosophical to ascribe them to the great and eternal Being
he heavens. Changes of opinion are almost uniformly the
lt of an influence *foreign* at first to our minds. It is the
ent, the friend, the advocate, the flatterer, or the infidel, that
suggested the train of thought which results in an entire
olution in our ways of thinking. It is some external change
ur business; some success or disappointment; some cutting
ur hopes by an agency not our own; or some sudden enlarge-
t of the opportunities for successful effort that fixes the pur-
e and revolutionizes the principles or the life. Or it is a voice
n the tomb—the remembered sentiment of the now speech-
dead, that arrests the attention and transforms the character
o and Epicurus have thus spoken to thousands of men in
ry age. Cicero in the forum. and Plato in the schools, still
forth an influence, stretching down from age to age, and in
gues unspoken by them and unknown. Voltaire and Hume
lift their voices, and urge the young to deeds of shame and
ne, and Volney and Paine still mutter from their graves, and
kon the world to atheism and pollution. Man may send an
ience round the globe, and command it to go from age to
. Now, in all these instances, the influence is as *foreign* and
rtain as in any power of God contemplated in revelation. To
view, it is quite as objectionable, as a part of moral govern-
t, that men should thus dispose each other to evil, and ulti-
ely to ruin, as that God should incline them to an *amendment*
character, and a deliverance from the "ills which flesh is
to."

ut how is man's freedom affected by all this? We reply,
ally in both cases, and not at all in either. Who ever felt, that
vas fettered in deriving notions of stern virtue from Seneca,
f profligacy from Epicurus? Who dreams there is any com-
atory process in listening to the voice of Hume, or imbibing
sentiments of Volney? Peter the hermit poured the thou-
ds of Europe, and almost emptied kingdoms caparisoned for
le, on the plains of Asia. But he moved none against their
l. Patrick Henry struck the notes of freedom, and a nation
onded, and were changed from subjects of a British king to
pendent freemen; but all were free in renouncing the pro-
ion of the British crown, and their reverence for a British
r. God influences countless hosts, pours upon darkened
ds the love of more than mortal freedom, opens upon the
ls the "*magnificence of eternity*," and the renewed multitude

tread the path to life. Prompted to intense efforts by the voi that calls to heaven—as he is who is led by the voice of h country to the field of blood, and who is changed from the peac ful ploughman to the soldier treading in the gore of the slain- they dream not that there is any violation of their moral freedo In *all* these cases the *foreign* influence exerted, (from whatev quarter it may have come,) has only convinced them as to t path of duty or of honour, and secured a conformity of their will to that of the unseen and foreign power.

Nor does it alter the case, that in regeneration a higher infl ence is exerted than that of mere moral suasion, since that infl ence operates in perfect conformity with the laws of moral actic and the freedom of the will. In all the cases supposed, the mi acts equally under the impulse of a *foreign*, unseen influenc and in all these cases we know, by the testimony of consciou ness, that we are equally free. Any objection, therefor against the existence of such an influence in regeneration, li with equal force against the analogy of nature, in the whol world of mind around us.

4. Religion affirms, that God exerts the power which *he* pu forth, in pursuance of a plan, or purpose, definitely fixed befo the foundation of the world. It affirms in as intelligible a for as any doctrine was ever expressed in any of the languages c men, that in regard to the putting forth of his power in savin sinners, there is no chance, no haphazard; that the scheme l before his eyes fully; and that his *acts* are only the *filling up* o the plan, and were contemplated, distinctly, when God dwe alone, in the stillness and solitude of his own eternity.* If suc a doctrine is not revealed, we think it impossible that it *could* b revealed in any language. And we know of no single doctri that has been more universally *conceded* by infidels to be in th scriptures; none in the Bible that has been so often brought for ward among their alleged reasons for rejecting it as a revelation none that has so frequently crossed the path of wicked men an revealed the secret rebellion of their hearts; none that has calle forth so much misplaced ingenuity from Socinians and Arm nians, and timid men who were afraid to trust the governmen of the world in the hands of its maker, as if he were not qualifie for universal empire; and none, therefore, which has in our vie such *prima facie* proof that it is manifestly a doctrine of truth a excellence. But the outcry, it seems to us, against this doctri has been altogether gratuitous and unwise. For who is stranger to the fact, that, from infancy to old age, we are mo or less influenced by the *plans or purposes of others?* The pl or purpose of a parent may determine almost every thing abo the destiny of a child. The purpose to remove from regions pestilence and *malaria*, may secure his health; the change fro one clime to another may determine the liberty he shall enjo the measure of his intelligence, the profession he shall choo

* Eph. i. 4, 5. Rom. viii. 29, 30; ix. 15, 16, 18, 21. John xvii. 2 Thess ii. 13. John [illegible]—29. 2 Tim [illegible] 9.

and ultimately his doom here and hereafter. Nay, the parent's *plan* may fix the very college where he shall study; the companions he shall choose; the law office, or the seminary where he shall prepare for professional life; and finally every thing which may establish his son in the world. So the *plan* of the infidel is successful in corrupting thousands of the young;—the *purpose* of Howard secured the welfare of thousands of prisoners; the determination of Washington resulted in the independence of his country. In all these, and ten thousand other cases there is a *plan* formed *by other beings* in respect to *us* which finally enters as a *controlling element* into our destiny. If it be said, that they all leave us free; so we say of the decrees of God, that we have a like consciousness of freedom. In neither case does the *foreign purpose* cripple or destroy our freedom. In neither case does it make any difference whether the plan was formed *an hour* before the act, or has stood fixed for ages. All that could bear on our freedom would be the fact, that the purpose was *previous to the deed*—a circumstance that does not alter the *act itself*, whether the decree be formed by ourselves, by other men, or by God.

But we remark further, that it is perfectly idle to object to the fact, that a plan or decree is contemplated in revelation; and that God should confer benefits on some individuals which are withheld from others. Did any man, in his senses, ever dream that the race are in all respects on an equality? Has there ever been a time, when one man has had just as much health as another; when one has been as rich as another, or as much honoured? To talk of the perfect equality of men, is one of the most unmeaning of all affirmations respecting the world. God has made differences, is still making them, and will continue to do so. The very frame work of society is organized on such a principle, that men *cannot* be all equal. Even if the scheme of modern infidelity should be successful—if all society should be broken up; and all property be meted out in specific dollars and cents to the idle and the industrious alike; and every man should lose his interest in his own wife and daughter, and they should become the common inheritance of the world, and all law should be at an end—if this scheme should go into disastrous accomplishment, what principle of perpetuity could there be devised? Who knows not that such a chaotic mass would settle down into some kind of order, and men be put in possession again of property, and some of the benefits of social life be again restored? Man might better attempt to make all trees alike, and all hills plains, and all fountains of the same dimensions, than to attempt to *level* society, and bring the race into entire equality. To the end of time it will be true that some will be poor while others are rich; that some will be sick while others are well; that some will be endowed with gigantic intellects, and enriched with ancient and modern learning, while others will pine in want, or walk the humble, but not ignoble vale of obscurity.

Now we might as well object to this fixed economy of things, as to that which affirms that God dispenses the blessings of

redemption according to his good pleasure. If God m
one blessing on one individual which he withholds from
we ask why he may not be a sovereign also in the disp
of *other* favours? We ask what principle of justice a
ness is violated, if he imparts penitence and faith to
vidual, that is not violated also if he gives him heal
another pines in sickness? We ask with emphasis,
there more of partiality in giving the Christian's hope
nerd or Martyn, than there is in giving great talents to
or great wealth to Crœsus? And we put it to the sober
of those who are so fond of representing the doctrine
bestows special grace on one and not on another, a
tyrannical, and malignant, whether they are not lifting th
against the manifest analogy of nature, and all the fac
moral and material world? We ask such a man to t
silent streets of one city where the pestilence spreads it
tions, and then another filled with the din of business, an
with health and gain—to go through one land and see
smile with golden grain, and rich with the vine and the
or fragrant with aromatics, and then through another w
heavens are brass, and the earth dust, and every gre
withers, and every man weeps while the horrors of fam
him in the face; to go amidst one people and hear the
of arms, or another and see the squalidness of poverty, o
and see every river studded with villages, and every
pointing its spire to heaven, and universal peace in all its
and education diffusing its blessings there—such obse
ask to tell us whether the destiny of *all* men is equal, ar
religion God may not do as he does in respect to health
dom, and to law?

We go further. We affirm, that unless this doctrin
tion were found in the scriptures, the scheme would be t
from all the analogy of the world. No man could re
feature of the plan on which God *actually* governs the
unless he found there the distinct affirmation that
chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world,
it is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runnet
God that showeth mercy." The system of conferring fa
he pleases; of giving wealth, and vigour and talent, and
is so much a matter of sovereignty, and the secret, w
possess these endowments, is so completely lodged in h
that any scheme to be conformed to the constitution an
of nature, *must* recognise this great principle, or we ar
to the alternative, that the *present* doings of God are w
the constitution of nature one of decisive evil. To us i
therefore, that they strike a blow of no ordinary viol
boldness, who denounce the purposes of God in the
dark, partial, and malignant. Nor can we conceive a n
assault on the whole frame-work of things, than the
scheme which denies that God has any purposes o
mercy; and that he confers any spiritual blessings on o

ıot on all,—or, in other words, which attempts to sepa-
scheme of redemption from the whole analogy of things
carried on in the world.

ı this point the entire movement of the world bears the
being conducted according to a *plan*. We defy a man
s finger on a fact, which has not such a relation to other
to show that it is part of a scheme—and if of a scheme,
purpose formed beforehand. Alexander the Great, in the
life, and in the full career of conquest, was cut off by
f God. Julian the apostate, in the same regions found
arly death, and gigantic plans were arrested by the hand
vith reference to other great purposes in the liberty or
of man. Napoleon met the mighty arm of God in the
the north, and the monarch fell—and with him fell the
ose of his life. In the midst of daring schemes, man
s. God wields the dart to strike in an unusual manner,
victim dies. He falls in with the great plans of the
eets snows, or lightnings, or burning heats, or piercing
ıt come round by the direction of the governor of the
ıd the man sinks, and *his* plans give way to the higher
of the Almighty.

ve know, that at any particular stage of this process we
ı discover that there was a plan or a scheme. And we
ıo that all the objections to such a scheme, result from
ıt single portions of the plan,—parts dissociated from the
In this world we think there is this universal principle
covered; APPARENT IRREGULARITY, RESULTING IN ULTI-
DER. During any one of the six days of creation we
:arcely have seen even the *outlines* of the world that ulti-
tarted up. Fix the eye on any *single* hour of the state
ıbryo, the egg, or the chrysalis, and who would suppose
s any plan or purpose with reference to the man of god-
ı and intelligence; or the beauty of the peacock, the speed
strich, the plaintive melody of the nightingale, or the
ırs of the butterfly? We might illustrate this fully by
ıce to the process of digestion. Who would suppose
formation of the chyle, that there was any thing like a
to supply a *red* fluid, or to give vigour to sinews, or
to the bones? So in all the works of God. We are
rised that unthinking men have doubted, whether God
ın or decree. So unlike the termination is the *actual*
ınd so little apparent reference is there to such a ter-
, that we are not amazed that men start back at the
ıtion of a decree. The truth is, that God has laid the
f his plan and decrees much deeper than his common
hey require more patient thought to trace them—they
remote and abstruse—and they cannot be seen, with-
:acing *at once* the commencement and termination, and
array of improbable *media* by which the result is to be

Yet to deny that God *has* a plan; that his plan may
ssed by the word *purpose* or *decree*, is as absurd as to

deny that the embryo is formed with reference to the future man, or the chyle to future blood, muscles, and bones. Who in looking upon a complicated piece of machinery would suppose that a *plan* was in operation tending to the manufacture of cloth, or the propelling of vessels, or the minuter works of art? What strikes the eye, is a collection of wheels moving without apparent order. Two wheels shall be beside each other moving in contrary directions; yet all shall ultimately combine to the production of the contemplated result. Thus move the events of the world; and so apparently irregular and unharmonious, but ultimately fixed and grand are the ways of God. As in a rapid, swollen stream, while the current rolls onward, here and there may be observed in the heaving waters, a small portion that seems to be setting in a contrary direction—an eddy that revolves near the shore, or that fills the vacancy made by some projecting tree or neck of land, yet *all* setting towards the ocean; so roll on the great events in God's moral and material universe—setting onwards towards eternity in furtherance of a plan awful, grand, benevolent.

We had intended to have noticed more fully the grand, peculiar doctrine of the gospel—the Trinity. But we have room only to say, that if, in the formation of *man*—in the structure of his mental and corporeal powers, and in their junction—if, in a being so constantly before our eyes, subjected, without material change, from age to age, to observation,—to the penetration of the most keen-sighted physiologists; open to every analysis which the metaphysician or the anatomist may choose to make; if, in the organization of such a being, there are mysteries which elude every eye, and mock every attempt at reconciliation, we do not think that religion is dealing out absurdities, when it tells of analogous depths in the unseen, inapproachable, and infinite God. Let the union of the soul and body be explained—the junction of a substance, ponderable, mortal, inactive, corruptible, and thoughtless, with one where there is nothing *but* thought—an invisible, imponderable, intelligible, incorruptible, and unmeasurable substance, having relation neither to sight, nor hearing, nor feeling, nor that we know of to place,—and yet *taking hold* by some invisible fixtures to the heavy organization, and directing all its movements, and receiving its *own* emotions from the *variations* of the outward tenement: let all this be explained, and we think we shall be ready to advance with the explanation to any difficulty of structure in the divine mind. Nay, further, when we look at the *animal frame* itself, we are met with difficulties of a kindred nature, which set all our faculties at defiance. There is a system of *bones*—complete in itself—an entire anatomical figure, which may be taken out and completed by itself—there is a system of arteries complete, and as capable of distinct contemplation;—there is the counterpart, an entire structure of *arteries reversed*, comprising the venous system; there is an almost independant organization of *nerves*, which, but for their frail texture, could be taken out, looked at also apart; and there

is, an absolute set of *muscles* which could be set up by themselves, and separately surveyed,—and yet these different systems are *driven together* into the most compact form; made to unite as friendly brethren, and cemented and bound, so as to make up the frame-work of man. Now, we affirm, that if these different independent systems are thus made to dwell in a single frame;—if we have no conception of *a man* without all this complication, and scarcely *with it*, that a revelation could be scarcely credible, unless there were some analogous difficulties in the being of a God. In his *mysteries*, man is the image of God, not less than in his dominion, and in the original moral image which he bore.

A large field is still open on which we can make but a passing remark—we mean the analogy of the *laws* of Christianity to those suggested by the constitution and course of nature. If our remarks have been correct, then it is fair to expect that religion would reveal such a set of laws as should be in accordance with the course of nature—that is, such as the actual order of events should show to be conducive to the true interest and welfare of man. We think it could be shown that the actual process of things, has conducted mankind, after the shedding of much blood, and after many toils of statesmen and sages, to just the set of rules which are found for human conduct in the Old and New Testaments. And it would be no uninteresting speculation to inquire into the changes in opinions and laws suggested by the history of events among nations—to see how one set of enactments struck out by the toils of some philosopher, and applied by some moralist or statesman, were persevered in until set aside by some opposing event in the government of God, and exchanged for a better system, for one more in accordance with the course of nature—until the revolutions of centuries, have brought men to the very laws of the scriptures, and the profoundest wisdom has been ascertained to be, to sit at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth and receive the law from his lips. We might remark on the law of theft in Lacedæmon; on the views in relation to rapine and war; on the seclusion from the world which guided the Essene of Judea, and the monk of the early and middle ages; on the indulgence of passion, recommended by the Epicureans; on the annihilation of sensibility, the secret of happiness, among the Stoics; on the law of universal selfishness, the *panacea* of all human ills recommended by infidelity; and on the laws of honour that have guided so many men to fields of disgrace and blood, and filled so many dwellings with weeping. In all the different codes, we think we could show that the *course of nature* has ultimately driven men from one set of laws to another, from one experiment to another, until every scheme terminated in its abandonment, or in shaping itself to the peculiar laws of the Bible. But on this point, which is capable of very ample illustration, we can do no more than simply point out the *principle*, in the words of a distinguished writer of our own country.* We make one extract from a sermon of high originality of thought,

* President Wayland.

power of argument, and beauty of diction, entitled "The certain triumph of the Redeemer."

"The laws of matter are few and comparatively simple, but those relations are multiplied even to infinity. The law of gravitation may be easily explained to an ordinary man, or even to an intelligent child. But who can trace one half of its relations to things solid and fluid, things animate and inanimate, the very form of society itself, to this system, other systems, in fine, to the mighty masses of the material universe? The mind delights to carry out such a principle to its ramified illustrations, and hence it cherishes as its peculiar treasure, a knowledge of the principles themselves. Thus was it that the discovery of such a law gave the name of Newton to immortality, reduced to harmony the once apparently discordant movements of our planetary system, taught us to predict the events of coming ages, and to explain what was before hidden from the foundation of the world.

"Now he who will take the trouble to examine, will perceive in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a system of ultimate truths in morals in a very striking manner analogous to these elementary laws in physics. In themselves they are few, simple, and easily understood. Their relations, however, as in the other case, are infinite. The moral principle by which you can easily teach your child to regulate her conduct in the nursery, will furnish matter for the contemplation of statesmen and sages. It is the only principle on which the decisions of cabinets and courts can be founded, and is, of itself, sufficient to guide the diplomatist through all the mazes of the most intricate negociation. Let any one who pleases make the experiment for himself. Let him take one of the rules of human conduct which the gospel prescribes, and, having obtained a clear conception of it, just as it is revealed, let him carry it out in its unshrinking application to the doings and dealings of men. At first, if he be not accustomed to generalizations of this sort, he will find much that will stagger him, and perhaps he will be led hastily to decide that the ethics of the Bible were never intended for practice. But let him look a little longer, and meditate a little more intensely, and expand his views a little more widely, or become, either by experience or by years, a little older, and he will more and more wonder at the profoundness of wisdom, and the universality of application of the principles of the gospel. With the most expanded views of society, he can go nowhere where the Bible has not been before him. With the most penetrating sagacity he can make no discovery which the Bible has not long ago promulgated. He will find neither application which the Bible did not foresee, nor exception against which it has not guarded. He will at last sink down in humble adoration of the wisdom of Jesus of Nazareth, convinced that he is the wisest man, as well as the profoundest philosopher, who yields himself up in meekness and simplicity of spirit to the teachings of the Saviour. Hence, there is the same sort of reason to believe that the precepts of the Bible will be read, and studied, and obeyed, as there

is to believe that the system of Newton will finally prevail, and eventually banish from the languages of men the astronomical dreams of Vishnu and Pandama."

We now take our leave of the Analogy of Butler. We have endeavoured to state the nature of the argument on which it rests. We would say, in conclusion, that it is one of easy and universal application. We know of no argument that is so potent to still the voice of unbelief in the heart--to silence every objection to all the doctrines of Christianity—or to subdue the soul, to an humble, reverential belief, that the God of creation is the God of redemption; and that he who clothes the sunbeam with light, and the flower with its beauty, is the same all-present being, that goes forth to the grander work of delivering the soul from sin. As God will continue the process of his government, as he will make the genial shower to rise and fertilize the earth, as he will clothe the hills and vales with verdure and beauty, despite of all the blasphemies of men; as he will cause new flowers to spring forth, however many the foot of hard-hearted man may crush, and as he will cause the glory of the *material* system to roll on from age to age, in spite of all the opposition and malice of devils and of men, so, we believe, he will also cause this more glorious system to ride triumphantly through the earth, and to shed its blessings on all the nations of the world. Man can triumph over neither. They are based on the solid rock. The plans of men reach them not. Parallel systems of providence and redemption, liable to the same objections, and presenting the same beauties, testify that they have come from the same God, and are tending to the same high developement.

We are of the number of those who do not shrink from avowing the opinion that the system of Christianity, as it has been held in the world, is capable of progressive improvements in the mode of its exhibition. This system, in the mind of the Son of God, was complete, and was so given to mankind. But we think that the world has not yet availed itself fully of the scheme. No earthly being ever yet so well understood the laws of the mind, as the Son of God; and the system, as held *by him*, was adapted to the true nature of created spirits, and to the regular course of things. But Christianity has often been attached to schemes of mental and moral philosophy as remote from the true one as "from the centre thrice to the utmost pole." Now, the improvement which we anticipate is, that men will consent to lay aside their systems of mental science; and with them much also of the technicalities of their theology—and suffer religion to speak in the words expressive of what Locke calls "large round-about sense," that they will be willing to inquire first what philosophy *religion* teaches, and then ask, if they choose, whether that philosophy is to be found in the schools. Could all the obstructions in the way of correct mental philosophy and natural science, be at once removed, we have no doubt that the Christian system would be seen to fall at once into the scheme of material and mental things. Now this is the kind of improvement which

we expect will take place in theology. An analogy could never be established between theology, as it *has* been held, and the common course of events. Religion, as it has been often presented, has been *unlike* all other things—so cold, distant, unliving, and formal, that we wonder not that men, who have had tolerably correct notions of the laws of the mind and of facts, should have shrunk from it; nor do we wonder that the preaching of no small number of ministers should have been fitted to make men Arminians, Socinians, or deists.

We have sat down in pensive grief, when we heard from the lips of tyros in divinity, (as the first message which they bring us,) solemn and unmeasured denunciations of *reason* in matters of religion. We have asked ourselves whence the herald has derived his commission to commence an assault on what has been implanted in the bosom of man by the hand of the Almighty? Has the book which he holds in his hands told him to utter unfeeling and proscriptive maledictions on all just views of mental operations? Has God commissioned him to summon the world to a rejection of all the lessons taught by the investigations of the mind; the decisions of conscience, and the course of events? Is the God who has hitherto been thought to be the God of creation and providence, coming forth, in the old age and decrepitude of the world, to declare that the fundamental principles of civil society, the judicial inflictions of his hand, the lessons taught us in parental and filial intercourse, and in the reasonings of sober men with the eye upturned to heaven, have all been delusive; and that the new revelation is to set at defiance all that has been ascertained to be law, and all that the world has supposed to be just maxims in morals? We marvel not that thinking men shrink from such sweeping denunciations. Nor do we wonder that the ministry is often despised, the sanctuary forsaken, and the day-dreams of any errorist adopted, who *professes* to give them proper place to the inferences drawn from the government of God.

It is a maxim, we think, which should rule in the hearts of Christian men, and

> "Most of all in man that ministers,
> And serves the altar,"

that the world is to be convinced *that Christians are not of necessity fools.* And in doing this, we care not how much of sound reason, and true philosophy, and the analogies of nature, are brought into the sacred desk. The truth is, that religion sets up its jurisdiction over all the operations of the mind. And the truth is, also, that those who have done most to vilify and abuse the use of reason, have been the very men who have incorporated the most of false philosophy into their own systems of divinity. It is not to be concealed, that the most ardent desire of the enemies of religion is that its ministers and friends, should deal out fierce denunciations against *reason*, and set up the system of Christianity as something holding in fixed defiance all the disco-

veries of knowledge and all the schemes of philosophy. More than half the work of atheism is done, if the world can be persuaded that Christianity contemplates the surrender of the deductions of reason and the course of the world into the hands of infidel philosophers; nor do we know a more successful artifice of the enemy of man than the schemes which have been devised to effect such a disjunction, and to set up the Christian plan as something that stands in irreconcilable opposition to the course of nature, and the just process of thought.

But, if the view which we have taken of this matter is correct, then all the works of God, far as the eye can reach, and far on beyond, are in strict accordance with the Christian scheme. One set of laws rules the whole; one set of principles reigns every where; one grand system of administration is going forward. Apparent differences between the Christian scheme and the course of events are daily becoming rarer, and soon the whole will be seen to harmonize. The laws of mental action are becoming better understood; and are found to coincide more and more with the plain, unperverted declarations of the Bible. The laws of nations are growing more mild, tender, bloodless, and forbearing. The great principles of morals are laying aside the ferocity of the darker ages, disrobing themselves of the principles of the Goth and the Vandal, and returning more and more to the simplicity of primeval life—to the principles of Abraham, "that beauteous model of an eastern prince, of David the warrior poet, of Daniel the far-sighted premier, of Paul the mild yet indomitable apostle, and of Jesus the meek Son of God."

We anticipate that the order of events, and the deductions of reason, and the decisions of the gospel, will yet be found completely to *tally:* so that Christianity shall come armed with the *double power* of having been sustained by miracles when first promulgated and when appearing improbable, and of falling in at last with all the proper feelings and just views of the world. As one evidence that the world is hasting to such a juncture we remark that the views entertained of moral character have undergone already a transformation. "What mother would now train her sons after the example of Achilles, and Hector, and Agamemnon, and Ulysses?" Other models, more like the Son of God, are placed before the infant mind. Society, in its vast revolutions, has brought itself into accordance, in this respect, with the New Testament. And we cannot but doubt that, though the affairs of the church and the world may yet flow on in somewhat distinct channels, yet they will finally sink into complete and perfect harmony; like two streams rising in distant hills, and rendering fertile different vales, yet at last flowing into the bosom of the same placid and beautiful ocean. Men will go on to make experiments in geology, and chymistry, and philosophy, in order to oppose the Bible, till scheme after scheme shall be abandoned. They will frame theories of mental science until they arrive at the scheme of the New Testament. They will devise modes of alleviating misery, until they fall on the

very plan suggested more than two thousand years before them. And they will form and abandon codes of morals, until they shall come at last in their international and private affairs, to the moral maxims of the New Testament—and the world shall arrive at the conclusion that the highest wisdom is to sit down like children at the feet of the Son of God.

And we may perhaps be permitted here to suggest that Christianity contains a provision for a *perpetuity* of proof that it is from God. We think it is idle to doubt that the evidence from miracles is more feeble *now* than it was when the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus were poured with such resistless might on the Roman empire. We mean that a missionary *now*, with all the zeal of martyrdom, has not with him the resistlessness of evidence for an ancient, which the apostles had for a contemporaneous fact. It is more difficult for us to prove the existence of Alexander of Macedon than it could have been for Tacitus or Cicero. But we ask why miracles were necessary at all? It was simply because the analogy of the new scheme to the course of nature was not *obvious* and commanding. There *appeared* to be an irreconcilable difference. Opinions, practices, systems, not fully tried and abandoned, opposed it. It was necessary to *beat down* their opposition by some signal display of infinite power. It was done. And not a system stood before the miraculous scheme. But as these schemes give way—as they are found to be useless and are abandoned—as society converges more and more to the simplicity in the New Testament, and as therefore religion commends itself to the understandings of men, and falls in with the *true* analogies of things, there is provision for the increasing feebleness of the evidence from miracles—and in other ages all the evidence that shall be needed of its truth, may be the simple *parallelism* between this and all the works and plan of God. If the comparison may not seem far drawn, the *strength* of the evidence arising from the *junction* of the system of nature and of grace, may be illustrated by the intense heat of the Compound blow-pipe—the blazing and resistless energy produced by the proper union of two independent elements, bearing on a single point.

And here we conclude by saying that the men who promulgated this system were Galilean peasants and fishermen. They had indubitably, little learning. They were strangers to the doctrines of the schools, to ancient and modern science, to the works of nature and of art. No infidel can prove that they knew more than the science necessary for the skilful management of a fishing boat, or the collection of taxes. And yet they have devised the only scheme which turns out to be in accordance with the course of nature; a scheme which has survived the extinction of most others prevalent in their day, a system *in advance* still,—no one can tell how much,—even of our own age. Now it is a well-known fact that, in the progress of discovery hitherto, no man has gone much in advance of his own generation. Society and science work themselves into a state for the discoveries

which actually take place, and hence it happens that, about the same time, the same invention is often made on both sides of the globe. A controversy still exists respecting the discovery of the art of printing, and gunpowder, the application of steam, the invention of the quadrant, and many of the improvements in chymistry. We ask then, how it has happened that these Galileans stepped over all the science of their own age, established a system in strict accordance with the course of nature, disclosed elementary principles of morals entirely unknown to the philosophy of that age, and arrived at, in the history of man, only by long and painful experiments of many thousand years? Why, let the sceptic tell us, has not science struck out principle after principle, that could long since have been organized into a system which should accord with the constitution and course of nature? To our minds, the greatest of all miracles would be, that unaided and uninspired fishermen should have projected such a scheme of Christianity.

Revealed religion, then, is in accordance with the course of nature. To reason against or reject it, on the principles commonly adopted by infidels, is to call in question the whole system of things around us. Nor will it answer any valuable purpose to laugh or mock at it. "There is argument neither in drollery nor in jibe." If, in spite of this striking accordance with the course of nature, it can be proved false, let the evidence be fairly brought forward. Let its miracles be set aside. Let its prophecies be shown not to have been uttered. And then let it be shown *how it is* that such a system has originated from such a source; a system which has bowed the intellects of such men as Bacon and Locke and Boyle and Hale and Boerhaave, and Newton and Edwards and Dwight. But if the demonstration cannot be made out,—if a single doubt remains, it will not do to deride this religion. It will no more do to meet the announcement of hell with a jeer, than to stand and mock at convulsions, fevers, and groans;—nor should men laugh at the judgment, any more than at the still tread of the pestilence, or the heavings of the earthquake;—nor will it be at all more the dictate of wisdom to contemn the provisions of redemption than to mock the pitying eye of a father, or to meet with contempt the pensive sigh of a mother over our sufferings, or to jeer at the physician who comes reverently, if it may be, to put back from us the heavy-pressing hand of God.

PREFACE

BY

SAMUEL HALIFAX, D.D.,

LATE LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER.

[The following prefatory analysis of Butler's *Moral and Religious Systems*, and of his method of applying reasonings drawn from Analogy to the Subject of Natural and Revealed Religion, deserves the marked attention of the student.]

In some editions, this preface is preceded by a few pages, designed to shield Bishop Butler's character against the charge of superstition; placing too much stress on rites and ceremonies in religion: a tendency to substitute penances and forms in the room of Christianity. We have omitted these pages as they are in no way connected with this work, and add nothing to its interest or value. There seems, however, to have been no just grounds for such a calumny. Bishop Butler, like many good men of the present age, was deeply affected by the growing indifference of the mass of the people to religious duties and observances; and in his primary charge to the Clergy of his Diocese in 1751, he boldly asserted the usefulness of forms and rites addressed to the senses *as aids to devotion and piety:* a charge, which, at the time, gave very general offence to the Church, and which, taken in connection with some other facts in the history of this good man's life, formed the stuff, out of which the allegations, we have referred to, were manufactured several years after his death.

It is painful to think so little of the moral and religious workings of the mind of this great man is known. We would gladly know something definitely of his intellectual and spiritual life, during the twenty years of study and preparation devoted to the composition of *The Analogy;* from the first rude conception of the work, until it came forth from his hands, like the statue from the mallet and chisel of the sculptor finished, *ad ungem*. Every sentence, it is said, has

been fashioned and moulded into the present form by repeated re-writing and condensation. And we can easily believe it, for the words are laid together in many sentences so closely and skilfully, that one more, or one less, would destroy the *unity and meaning of the whole.*

The literary reputation of Bishop Butler, however, is in truth the least of his excellencies. He was more than a good writer: he was a good man; and what is an addition even to this eulogy, he was a sincere Christian. His whole study was directed to the knowledge and practice of sound morality and true religion; these he adorned by his life, and has recommended to future ages in his writings; in which, if my judgment be of any avail, he has done essential service to both, as much, perhaps, as any single person, since the extraordinary gifts of "the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge"* have been withdrawn.

In what follows I propose to give a short account of the Bishop's *moral and religious systems,* as these are collected from his works.

I. His way of treating the subject of *morals* is to be gathered from the volume of his Sermons, and particularly from the three first, and from the preface to that volume.

"There is," as our author with singular sagacity has observed, "a much more exact correspondence between the natural and moral world, than we are apt to take notice of."† The inward frame of man answers to his outward condition; the several propensities, passions, and affections, implanted in our hearts by the Author of nature, are in a particular manner adapted to the circumstances of life in which he hath placed us. This general observation, properly pursued, leads to several important conclusions. The original internal constitution of man, compared with his external condition, enables us to discern what course of action and behavior that constitution leads to, what is our duty respecting that condition, and furnishes us besides with the most powerful arguments to the practice of it.

What the inward frame and constitution of man is, is a question of fact; to be determined, as other facts are, from experience, from our internal feelings and external senses

* 1 Cor. xii. 8. † Serm. vi.

ıd from the testimony of others. Whether human nature, ıd the circumstances in which it is placed, might not have ɛen ordered otherwise, is foreign to our inquiry, and none our concern. Our province is, taking both of these as ıey are, and viewing the connexion between them, from ıat connexion to discover, if we can, what course of action fitted to that nature and those circumstances. From con-ımplating the bodily senses, and the organs or instruments dapted to them, we learn that the eye was given to see ·ith, the ear to hear with. In like manner, from consider-ıg our inward perceptions and the final causes of them, we ɔllect that the feeling of shame, for instance, was given to revent the doing of things shameful; compassion, to carry s to relieve others in distress; anger, to resist sudden vio-ɛnce offered to ourselves. If, continuing our inquiries in ıis way, it should at length appear, that the nature, the ·hole nature of man leads him to, and is fitted for, that par-cular course of behaviour which we generally distinguish-d by the name of virtue, we are authorized to conclude, ıat virtue is the law we are born under, that it was so in-ended by the Author of our being; and we are bound by he most intimate of all obligations, a regard to our own ıgh interest and happiness, to conform to it in all situations .nd events.

Human nature is not simple and uniform, but made up ·f several parts; and we can have no just idea of it as a ystem or constitution, unless we take into our view he respects and relation which these parts have to each ıther. As the body is not one member, but many; so ur inward structure consists of various instincts, appetites, nd propensions. Thus far there is no difference between ıuman creatures and brutes. But besides these common assions and affections, there is another principle pecu-iar to mankind, that of conscience, moral sense, reflection, all it what you please, by which they are enabled to review heir whole conduct, to approve of some actions in them-elves, and to disapprove of others. That this principle will f course have *some* influence on our behaviour, at least at imes, will hardly be disputed; but the particular influence ·uich it *ought* to have, the precise degree of power in the egulating of our internal frame that is assigned it by Him ·ho placed it there, is a point of the utmost consequence in tself, and on the determination of which, the very hinge of ur Author's Moral System turns. If the faculty here spo-

ken of be, indeed, what it is asserted to be, in nature and kind, *superior* to every other passion and affection; if it be given, not merely that it may exert its force occasionally, or as our present humour or fancy may dispose us, but that it may at all times exercise an uncontrollable authority and government over all the rest; it will then follow, that, in order to complete the idea of human nature as a system, we must not only take in each particular bias, propension, instinct, which are seen to belong to it, but we must add, besides, the principle of conscience, together with the subjection that is due to it from all the other appetites and passions; just as the idea of a civil constitution is formed, not barely from enumerating the several members and ranks of which it is composed, but from these considered as acting in various degrees of subordination to each other, and all under the direction of the supreme authority, whether that authority, be vested in one person or more.

The view here given of the internal constitution of man, and of the supremacy of conscience, agreeable to the conceptions of Bishop Butler, enables us to comprehend the force of that expression, common to him and the ancient moralists, that virtue consists in *following nature*. The meaning cannot be, that it consists in acting agreeably to that propensity of our nature which happens to be the strongest; or which propels us towards certain objects without any regard to the methods by which they are to be obtained; but the meaning must be, that virtue consists in the due regulation and subjection of all the other appetites and affections to the superior faculty of conscience; from a conformity to which alone our actions are properly *natural*, or correspondent to the nature, to the whole nature, of such an agent as man. From hence too it appears, that the Author of our frame is by no means indifferent to virtue and vice, or has left us at liberty to act at random, as humour or appetite may prompt us; but that every man has the rule of right within him; a rule attended in the very notion of it with authority, and such as has the force of a direction and a command from Him who made us what we are, what course of behaviour is suited to our nature, and which he expects that we should follow. This moral faculty implies also a presentiment and apprehension, that the judgment which it passes on our actions, considered as of good or ill desert, will hereafter be confirmed by the unerring judgment of God; when virtue *and happiness*, vice and misery, whose ideas are now se-

closely connected, shall be indissolubly united, and the divine government be found to correspond in the most exact proportion to the nature he has given us. Lastly, this just prerogative or supremacy of conscience it is, which Mr Pope has described in his *Universal Prayer*, though perhaps he may have expressed it rather *too* strongly where he says,

'What conscience dictates to be done
Or warns me not to do,
This teach me *more than* hell to shun,
That, *more than* heaven pursue.'

The reader will observe, that this way of treating the subject of morals, by an appeal to *facts*, does not at all interfere with that other way, adopted by Dr Samuel Clarke and others, which begins with inquiring into the *relations* and *fitness of things*, but rather illustrates and confirms it. That there are essential differences in the qualities of human actions, established by nature, and that this *natural* difference of things, prior to and independent of all *will*, creates a natural *fitness* in the agent to act agreeably to it, seems as little to be denied, as that there is the *moral* difference before explained, from which we approve and feel a pleasure in what is right, and conceive a distaste to what is wrong. Still, however, when we are endeavoring to establish either this moral or that natural difference, it ought never to be forgotten, or rather it will require to be distinctly shown, that both of these, when traced up to their source, suppose an intelligent Author of nature, and moral ruler of the world; who originally appointed these differences, and by such an appointment has signified his *will* that we should conform to them, as the only effectual method of securing our *happiness* on the whole under his government.* And of this consideration our prelate himself was not unmindful; as may be collected from many expressions in different parts of his writings, and particularly from the following passages in his XIth Sermon. 'It may be allowed, without any prejudice to the cause of virtue and religion, that our ideas of happiness and misery are, of all our ideas, the nearest and most important to us; that they will, nay, if you please, that they ought to prevail over those of order, and beauty, and harmony, and proportion, if there should ever be, as it is impossible there ever should be, any inconsistence between them.' And

* See *note E*, at the end of this Preface.

again, 'Though virtue or moral rectitude does indeed, consist in affection to and pursuit of what is right and good, as such; yet, when we sit down in a cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit, till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it.'*

Besides the general system of morality opened above, our Author, in his volume of Sermons, has stated with accuracy the difference between self love and benevolence; in opposition to those who, on the one hand, make the whole of virtue to consist in benevolence,† and to those who, on the other, assert that every particular affection and action is resolvable into self-love. In combating these opinions, he has shown, I think, unanswerably, that there are the same kind of indications in human nature, that we were made to promote the happiness of others, as that we were made to promote our own; that it is no just objection to this, that we have dispositions to do *evil* to *others* as well as good; for we have also dispositions to do *evil* as well as good to *ourselves*, to our own most important interests even in this life, for the sake of gratifying a present passion; that the thing to be lamented is, not that men have too great a regard to their own real good, but that they have not enough; that benevolence is not more at variance with, or unfriendly to, self-love, than any other particular affection is; and that by consulting the happiness of others a man is so far from *lessening* his own, that the very endeavour to do so though he should fail in the accomplishment, is a source of the highest satisfaction and peace of mind.‡ He has also, in passing, animadverted on the philosopher of Malmsbury, who, in his book 'Of Human Nature,' has advanced, as discoveries in moral science, that benevolence is only the love of power, and compassion the fear of future calamity to ourselves. And this our Author has done, not so much with the design of exposing the false reasoning of Mr Hobbes, but because on so perverse an account of human nature he has raised a system, subversive of all justice and honesty.§

II. The religious system of Bishop Butler is chiefly to be collected from the treatise, entitled, 'The Analogy of

* Serm. xi.
† See the 2d Dissertation 'On the Nature of Virtue.'
‡ See Serm. i. and xi. and the Preface to the Volume of Sermons.
§ See the notes to Serm. i. and v.

Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of nature.'

'All things are double one against another, and God hath made nothing imperfect.'* On this single observation of the Son of Sirach, the whole fabric of our prelate's defence of religion, in his Analogy, is raised. Instead of indulging in idle speculations, how the world might possibly have been better than it is; or, forgetful of the difference between hypothesis and fact, attempting to explain the divine economy with respect to intelligent creatures, from preconceived notions of his own; he first inquires what the constitution of nature, as made known to us in the way of experiment, actually is; and from this, now seen and acknowledged, he endeavours to form a judgment of that larger constitution, which religion discovers to us. If the dispensation of Providence we are now under, considered as inhabitants of this world, and having a temporal interest to secure in it, be found, on examination, to be analogous to, and of a piece with that further dispensation, which relates to us as designed for another world, in which we have an eternal interest, depending on our behaviour here; if both may be traced up to the same general laws, and appear to be carried on according to the same plan of administration; the fair presumption is, that both proceed from one and the same Author. And if the principal parts objected to in this latter dispensation be similar to, and of the same kind with what we certainly experience under the former; the objections, being clearly inconclusive in one case, because contradicted by plain fact, must, in all reason, be allowed to be inconclusive also in the other.

This way of arguing from what is acknowledged to what is disputed, from things known to other things that resemble them, from that part of the divine establishment which is exposed to our view to that more important one which lies beyond it, is on all hands confessed to be just. By this method Sir Isaac Newton has unfolded the system of nature; by the same method Bishop Butler has explained the system of grace; and thus, to use the words of a writer, whom I quote with pleasure, 'has formed and concluded a happy alliance between faith and philosophy.'†

And although the argument from analogy be allowed to be imperfect, and by no means sufficient to solve all difficul-

* Eccles. xlii. 24.

† Mr Mainwaring's Dissertation, prefixed to his Volume of Sermons.

ties respecting the government of God, and the designs of his providence with regard to mankind; (a degree of knowledge, which we are not furnished with faculties for attaining, at least in the present state;) yet surely it is of importance to learn from it, that the natural and moral world are intimately connected, and parts of one stupendous whole, or system; and that the chief objections which are brought against religion, may be urged with equal force against the constitution and course of nature, where they are certainly false in fact. And this information we may derive from the work before us; the proper design of which, it may be of use to observe, is not to prove the truth of religion, either natural or revealed, but to confirm that proof already known, by considerations from analogy.

After this account of the method of reasoning employed by our Author, let us now advert to his manner of applying it, first, to the subject of Natural Religion, and, secondly, to that of Revealed.

1. The foundation of all our hopes and fears is a future life; and with this the treatise begins. Neither the reason of the thing, nor the analogy of nature, according to Bishop Butler, give ground for imagining, that the unknown event, death, will be our destruction. The states in which we have formerly existed, in the womb and in infancy, are not more different from each other than from that of mature age in which we now exist; therefore, that we shall continue to exist hereafter, in a state as different from the present as the present is from those through which we have passed already, is a presumption favored by the analogy of nature. All that we know from reason concerning death, is the effects it has upon animal bodies; and the frequent instances among men, of the intellectual powers continuing in high health and vigour, at the very time when a mortal disease is on the point of putting an end to all the powers of sensation, induce us to hope that it may have no effect at all on the human soul, not even so much as to suspend the exercise of its faculties; though if it have, the suspension of a power by no means implies its extinction, as sleep or a swoon may convince us.*

The probability of a future state once granted, an important question arises, How best to secure our interest in that state? We find from what passes daily before us, that the constitution of nature admits of misery as well as happiness;

* Part i. chap. 1.

that both of these are the consequences of our own actions, and these consequences we are enabled to foresee. Therefore, that our happiness or misery in a future world may depend on our own actions also, and that rewards or punishments hereafter may follow our good or ill behaviour here, is but an appointment of the same sort with what we experience under the divine government, according to the regular course of nature.*

This supposition is confirmed from another circumstance, that the natural government of God, under which we now live, is also moral; in which rewards and punishments are the consequences of actions, considered as virtuous and vicious. Not that every man is rewarded or punished here in exact proportion to his desert; for the essential tendencies of virtue and vice, to produce happiness and the contrary, are often hindered from taking effect from accidental causes. However, there are plainly the rudiments and beginnings of a righteous administration to be discerned in the constitution of nature; from whence we are led to expect, that these accidental hindrances will one day be removed, and the rule of distributive justice obtain completely in a more perfect state.†

The moral government of God, thus established, implies in the notion of it some sort of trial, or a moral possibility of acting wrong as well as right in those who are the subjects of it. And the doctrine of religion, that the present life is in fact a state of probation for a future one, is rendered credible from its being analogous throughout to the general conduct of Providence towards us with respect to this world; in which prudence is necessary to secure our temporal interest, just as we are taught that virtue is necessary to secure our eternal interest; and both are trusted to ourselves ‡

But the present life is not merely a state of probation, implying in it difficulties and danger, it is also a state of discipline and improvement: and that, both in our temporal and religious capacity. Thus, childhood is a state of discipline for youth; youth for manhood; and that for old age. Strength of body, and maturity of understanding, are acquired by degrees: and neither of them without continual exercise and attention on our part, not only in the beginning of life, but through the whole course of it. So, again, with respect to our religious concerns, the present world is fitted to be, and

* Chap. 2 † Chap. 3. ‡ Part i. chap. 4.

to good men is an event, a state of discipline and improvement for a future one. The several passions and propensions implanted in our hearts, incline us, in a multitude of instances, to forbidden pleasures; this inward infirmity is increased by various snares and temptations, perpetually occurring from without: hence arises the necessity of recollection and self-government, of withstanding the calls of appetite, and forming our minds to habits of piety and virtue; habits of which we are capable, and which, to creatures in a state of moral imperfection, and fallen from their original integrity, must be of the greatest use, as an additional security, over and above the principle of conscience, from the dangers to which we are exposed.*

Nor is the credibility here given, by the analogy of nature, to the general doctrine of religion, destroyed or weakened by any notions concerning necessity. Of itself it is a mere word, the sign of an abstract idea; and as much requires an agent, that is, a necessary agent in order to effect any thing, as freedom requires a free agent. Admitting it to be speculatively true, if considered as influencing practice, it is the same as false: for it is matter of experience, that, with regard to our present interest, and as inhabitants of this world, we are treated as if we were free; and therefore the analogy of nature leads us to conclude, that, with regard to our future interest, and as designed for another world, we shall be treated as free also. Nor does the opinion of necessity supposing it possible, at all affect either the general proof of religion, or its external evidence.†

Still objections may be made against the wisdom and goodness of the divine government, to which analogy, which can only show the truth or credibility of facts, affords no answer. Yet even here analogy is of use, if it suggest that the divine government is a scheme or system and not a number of unconnected acts, and that this system is also above our comprehension. Now, the government of the natural world appears to be a system of this kind; with parts, related to each other, and together composing a whole: in which system, ends are brought about by the use of means, many of which means, before experience, would have been suspected to have had a quite contrary tendency; which is carried on by general laws, similar causes uniformly producing similar effects; the utility of which general laws, and the inconve-

* Chap. 5. † Part I. Chap. 6.

iences which would probably arise from the occasional or ven secret suspension of them, we are in some sort enabled) discern;* but of the whole we are incompetent judges, ecause of the small part which comes within our view. easoning then from what we know, it is highly credible, iat the government of the moral world is a system also car- ed on by general laws, and in which ends are accomplish- l by the intervention of means; and that both constitu- ons, the natural and the moral, are so connected, as to form gether but one scheme. But of this scheme, as that of ie natural world taken alone, we are not qualified to judge ı account of the mutual respect of the several parts to each ther and to the whole, and our own incapacity to survey ie whole, or, with accuracy, any single part. All objec- ons, therefore, to the wisdom and goodness of the divine overnment may be founded merely on our ignorance;† and) such objections our ignorance is the proper, and a satis- ictory answer.‡

2. The chief difficulties concerning Natural Religion be- ıg now removed, our Author proceeds, in the next place, to iat which is revealed; and as an introduction to an inquiry ito the Credibility of Christianity, begins with the conside- ation of its Importance.

The importance of Christianity appears in two respects. *irst*, In its being a republication of natural Religion, in its ative simplicity, with authority, and with circumstances of dvantage; ascertaining in many instances of moment, hat before was only probable, and particularly confirming ie doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments.§ *econdly*, As revealing a new dispensation of Providence, riginating from the pure love and mercy of God, and con- ucted by the mediation of his Son, and the guidance of is Spirit, for the recovery and salvation of mankind, re resented in a state of apostacy and ruin. This account of hristianity being admitted to be just, and the distinct offi- es of these three divine persons being once discovered to is, we are as much obliged, in point of duty, to acknowledge he relations we stand in to the Son and Holy Ghost, as our Mediator and Sanctifier, as we are obliged in point of duty

* See a Treatise on Divine Benevolence, by Dr Thomas Balguy, art ii.

† See Note F, at the end of this Preface.

‡ Part i. Chap. 7.

§ See note G, at the end of this Preface

to acknowledge the relation we stand in to God the Father; although the two former of these relations be learnt from revelation only, and in the last we are instructed by the light of nature; the obligation in either case, arising from the offices themselves, and not at all depending on the manner in which they are made known to us.*

The presumptions against revelation in general are, that it is not discoverable by reason, that it is unlike to what is so discovered, and that it was introduced and supported by miracles. But in a scheme so large as that of the universe unbounded in extent and everlasting in duration, there must of necessity be numberless circumstances which are beyond the reach of our faculties to discern, and which can only be known by divine illumination. And both in the natural and moral government of the world, under which we live, we find many things unlike one to another, and therefore ought not to wonder if the same unlikeness obtain between things visible and invisible; although it be far from true, that revealed religion is entirely unlike the constitution of nature as analogy may teach us. Nor is there any thing incredible in revelation, considered as miraculous; whether miracles be supposed to have been performed at the beginning of the world, or after a course of nature has been established. No *at the beginning of the world;* for then there was either no course of nature at all, or a power must have been exerted totally different from what that course is at present. All men and animals cannot have been born, as they are now but a pair of each sort must have been produced at first, in a way altogether unlike to that in which they have been since produced; unless we affirm, that men and animals have existed from eternity in an endless succession. One miracle, therefore, at least, there must have been at the beginning of the world, or at the time of man's creation. Nor *after the settlement of a course of nature,* on account of miracles being contrary to that course, or, in other words, contrary to experience; for, in order to know whether miracles worked in attestation of a divine religion, be contrary to experience or not, we ought to be acquainted with other cases similar or parallel to those in which miracles are alleged to have been wrought. But where shall we find such similar or parallel cases? The world which we inhabit affords none. We know of no extraordinary revelations from God

* Part ii. Chapter 5

but those recorded in the Old and New Testament; which were established by miracles. It cannot therefore be said, that miracles are incredible, because contrary to nce, when all the experience we have is in favor of s, and on the side of religion.* Besides, in reasoning concerning miracles, they ought not to be compared with ı natural events, but with uncommon appearances, comets, magnetism, electricity; which, to one acl only with the usual phenomena of nature, and the ı powers of matter, must before proof of their actual e, be thought incredible.†

presumptions against Revelation in general being ıed, objections against the Christian Revelation in ar, against the scheme of it, as distinguished from ıs against its evidence, are considered next. Now, ıg a revelation to be really given, it is highly probaehand, that it must contain many things appearing ble to objections. The acknowledged dispensation e is very different from what we should have expectsoning then from analogy, the revealed dispensation, lible, would be also different. Nor are we in any ges at what time, or in what degree, or manner it is pedient for God to instruct us, in things confessedly reatest use, either by natural reason, or by supernaormation. Thus, arguing on speculation only, and experience, it would seem very unlikely that so ima remedy as that provided by Christianity, for the reof mankind from a state of ruin, should have been ıany ages withheld; and, when at last vouchsafed, ıe imparted to so few; and, after it has been imparted be attended with obscurity and doubt. And just ight have argued, before experience, concerning the s provided in nature for bodily diseases, to which re we are exposed: for many of these were unknown ind for a number of ages; are known but to few me important ones probably not discovered yet; and hich are, neither certain in their application, nor uni- their use. And the same mode of reasoning that ead us to expect they should have been so, would to expect that the necessity of them should have perseded, by there being no diseases; as the neces- he Christian scheme, it may be thought, might also

* See H, at the end of this Preface. † Chap. I.

have been superseded, by preventing the fall of man, so that he should not have stood in need of a Redeemer at all.*

As to the objections against the wisdom and goodness of Christianity, the same answer may be applied to them as was to the like objections against the constitution of nature. For here also, Christianity is a scheme or economy, composed of various parts, forming a whole, in which scheme means are used for the accomplishing of ends; and which is conducted by general laws, of all of which we know as little as we do of the constitution of nature. And the seeming want of wisdom or goodness in this system is to be ascribed to the same cause, as the like appearances of defects in the natural system; our inability to discern the whole scheme, and our ignorance of the relation of those parts which are discernible to others beyond our view.

The objections against Christianity, as a matter of fact, and against the wisdom and goodness of it, having been obviated together, the chief of them are now to be considered distinctly. One of these, which is levelled against the entire system itself, is of this sort: The restoration of mankind, represented in Scripture as the great design of the gospel, is described as requiring a long series of means, and persons, and dispensations, before it can be brought to its completion; whereas the whole ought to have been effected at once. Now every thing we see in the course of nature, shows the folly of this objection. For in the natural course of Providence, ends are brought about by means, not operating immediately and at once, but deliberately and in a way of progression; one thing being subservient to another, this to somewhat further. The change of seasons, the ripening of fruits, the growth of vegetable and animal bodies, are instances of this. And therefore, that the same progressive method should be followed in the dispensation of Christianity, as is observed in the common dispensation of Providence, is a reasonable expectation justified by the analogy of nature.†

Another circumstance, objected to in the Christian scheme, is the appointment of a Mediator, and the saving of the world through him. But the visible government of God being actually administered in this way, or by the mediation and instrumentality of others, there can be no general presumption against an appointment of this kind, against this

* Chap. 3. † Chap. 4.

invisible government being exercised in the same manner. We have seen already, that with regard to ourselves this visible government is carried on by rewards and punishments; for happiness and misery are the consequences of our own actions, considered as virtuous and vicious; and these consequences we are enabled to foresee. It might have been imagined, before consulting experience, that after we had rendered ourselves liable to misery by our own ill conduct, sorrow for what was past, and behaving well for the future, would, alone, and of themselves, have exempted us from deserved punishment, and restored us to the divine favor. But the fact is otherwise; and real reformation is often found to be of no avail, so as to secure the criminal from poverty, sickness, infamy, and death, the never failing attendants on vice and extravagance, exceeding a certain degree. By the course of nature then it appears, God does not always pardon a sinner on his repentance. Yet there is provision made, even in nature, that the miseries which men bring on themselves, by unlawful indulgences, may in many cases be mitigated, and in some removed; partly by extraordinary exertions of the offender himself, but more especially and frequently by the intervention of others, who voluntarily, and from motives of compassion, submit to labor and sorrow, such as produce long and lasting inconveniences to themselves, as the means of rescuing another from the wretched effects of former imprudences. Vicarious punishment, therefore, or one person's sufferings contributing to the relief of another, is a providential disposition in the economy of nature.* And it ought not to be matter of surprise, if by a method analogous to this we be redeemed from sin and misery, in the economy of grace. That mankind at present are in a state of degradation, different from that in which they were originally created, is the very ground of the Christian revelation, as contained in the Scriptures. Whether we acquiesce in the account, that our being placed in such a state is owing to the crime of our first parents, or choose to ascribe it to any other cause, it makes no difference as to our condition: the vice and unhappiness of the world are still there, notwithstanding all our suppositions; nor is it Christianity that hath put us into this state. We learn also from the same Scriptures, what experience and the use of expiatory sacrifices from the most early times

* See note I, at the end of this Preface.

might have taught us, that repentance alone is not sufficient to prevent the fatal consequences of past transgressions But that still there is room for mercy, and that repentance shall be available, though not of itself, yet through the mediation of a divine person, the Messiah; who, from the sublimest principles of compassion, when we were dead in trespasses and sins,* suffered and died, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust,† that we might have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.‡. In what way the death of Christ was of that efficacy it is said to be, in procuring the reconciliation of sinners, the Scriptures have not explained. It is enough that the doctrine is revealed; that it is not contrary to any truth which reason and experience teach us; and that it accords in perfect harmony with the usual method of the divine conduct in the government of the world.§

Again it hath been said, that if the Christian revelation were true, it must have been universal, and could not have been left upon doubtful evidence. But God, in his natural providence, dispenses his gifts in great variety, not only among creatures of the same species, but to the same individuals also at different times. Had the Christian revelation been universal at first, yet, from the diversity of men's abilities, both of mind and body, their various means of improvement, and other external advantages, some persons must soon have been in a situation, with respect to religious knowledge, much superior to that of others, as much perhaps as they are at present. And all men will be equitably dealt with at last; and to whom little is given, of him little will be required. Then, as to the evidence of religion being left doubtful, difficulties of this sort, like difficulties in practice, afford scope and opportunity for a virtuous exercise of the understanding, and dispose the mind to acquiesce and rest satisfied with any evidence that is real. In the daily commerce of life, men are obliged to act upon great uncertainties, with regard to success in their temporal pursuits: and the case with regard to religion is parallel. However, though religion be not intuitively true, the proofs of it which we have are amply sufficient in reason to induce us to embrace it; and dissatisfaction with those proofs may possibly be men's own fault.‖

Nothing remains but to attend to the positive evidence

* Eph. ii. 1. † 1 Pet. iii. 18. ‡ Colos. i. 14.
§ Chap. 5. ‖ Chap. 6.

there is for the truth of Christianity. Now, besides its direct and fundamental proofs, which are miracles and prophecies; there are many collateral circumstances, which may be united into one view, and altogether may be considered as making up one argument. In this way of treating the subject, the revelation, whether real or otherwise, may be supposed to be wholly historical: the general design of which appears to be, to give an account of the condition of religion, and its professors, with a concise narration of the political state of things, as far as religion is affected by it, during a great length of time, near six thousand years of which are already past. More particularly, it comprehends an account of God's entering into covenant with one nation, the Jews, that he would be their God, and that they should be his people; of his often interposing in their affairs; giving them the promise; and afterwards the possession, of a flourishing country; assuring them of the greatest national prosperity in case of their obedience, and threatening the severest national punishment in case they forsook him, and joined in the idolatry of their pagan neighbors. It contains also a prediction of a particular person to appear in the fulness of time, in whom all the promises of God to the Jews were to be fulfilled. And it relates, that, at the time expected, a person did actually appear, assuming to be the Saviour fore told; that he worked various miracles among them, in confirmation of his divine authority; and as was foretold also, was rejected and put to death by the very people who had long desired and waited for his coming: But that his religion, in spite of all opposition, was established in the world by his disciples, invested with supernatural powers for that purpose; of the fate and fortunes of which religion there is a prophetical description, carried down to the end of time. Let any one now, after reading the above history, and not knowing whether the whole were not a fiction, be supposed to ask, Whether all that is here related be true? and instead of a direct answer, let him be informed of the several acknowledged facts, which are found to correspond to it in real life; and then, let him compare the history and facts together, and observe the astonishing coincidence of both: Such a joint review must appear to him of very great weight, and to amount to evidence somewhat more than human. And unless the whole series, and every particular circumstance

contained in it, can be thought to have arisen from accident, the truth of Christianity is proved.*

The view here given of the moral and religious systems of Bishop Butler, it will immediately be perceived, is chiefly intended for younger students, especially for students in divinity; to whom it is hoped it may be of use, so as to encourage them to peruse, with proper diligence, the original works of the Author himself. For it may be necessary to observe, that neither of the volumes of this excellent prelate are addressed to those who read for amusement, or curiosity, or to get rid of time. All subjects are not to be comprehended with the same ease; and morality and religion, when treated as sciences, each accompanied with difficulties of its own, can neither of them be understood as they ought, without a very peculiar attention. But morality and religion are not merely to be studied as sciences, or as being speculatively true; they are to be regarded in another and higher light, as the rule of life and manners, as containing authoritative directions by which to regulate our faith and practice. And in this view, the infinite importance of them considered, it can never be an indifferent matter whether they be received or rejected. For both claim to be the voice of God; and whether they be so or not, cannot be known, till their claims be impartially examined. If they indeed come from him, we are bound to conform to them at our peril: nor is it left to our choice, whether we will submit to the obligations they impose upon us or not; for submit to them we must, in such a sense, as to incur the punishments denounced by both against wilful disobedience to their injunctions.

* Chap. 7. To the Analogy are subjoined two Dissertations, both originally inserted in the body of the work. One on *Personal Identity*, in which are contained some strictures on Mr Locke, who asserts that consciousness makes or constitutes personal identity; whereas, as our author observes, consciousness makes only personality, or is necessary to the idea of a person, *i. e.* a thinking, intelligent being, but presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity; just as knowledge presupposes truth, but does not constitute it. Consciousness of past actions does indeed show us the identity of ourselves, or gives us a certain assurance that we are the same persons or living agents now, which we were at the time to which our remembrance can look back; but still we should be the same persons as we were, though this consciousness of what is past were wanting, though all that had been done by us formerly were forgotten; unless it be true, that no person has existed a single moment beyond what he can remember. The other dissertation is *On the Nature of Virtue*, which properly belongs to the moral system of our Author already explained.

THE LIFE

OF

DR BUTLER.

Joseph Butler, a prelate of the most distinguished
cter and abilities, was born at Wantage, in Berk-
in the year 1692. His father Mr. Thomas Butler,
was a substantial and reputable shopkeeper in that
observing in his son Joseph* an excellent genius and in-
ion for learning, determined to educate him for the min-
among the Protestant dissenters of the presbyterian
nination. For this purpose, after he had gone through
per course of grammatical literature, at the free gram-
chool of his native place, under the care of the Rev.
Philip Barton, a clergyman of the Church of England,
as sent to a dissenting academy, then kept at Glouces-
ut which was soon afterwards removed to Tewksbury.
principal tutor of this academy was Mr Jones, a man
common abilities and knowledge, who had the honor
ining up several scholars, who became of great emi-
, both in the established church and among the dissen-
At Tukesbury, Mr Butler made an extraordinary
ess in the study of divinity; of which he gave a re-
able proof, in the letters addressed by him while he
d at Tukesbury, to Dr Samuel Clarke, laying before
he doubts that had arisen in his mind, concerning the
usiveness of some arguments in the Doctor's demon-
n of the being and attributes of God. The first of
letters was dated the 4th November, 1713; and the
ity and depth of thought displayed in it, immediately
d Dr Clark's particular notice. This condescension

* He was the youngest of eight children.

encouraged Mr Butler to address the Doctor again upon the same subject, which likewise was answered by him: and the correspondence being carried on in three other letters, the whole was annexed to the celebrated treatise before mentioned, and the collection has been retained in all the subsequent editions of that work. The management of this correspondence was intrusted by Mr Butler to his friend and fellow pupil, Mr Secker, who, in order to conceal the affair, undertook to convey the letters to the post-office at Gloucester, and to bring back Dr Clark's answers. When Mr Butler's name was discovered to the doctor, the candor, modesty, and good sense, with which he had written, immediately procured him the friendship of that eminent and excellent man. Our young student was not, however, during his continuance at Tukesbury, solely employed in metaphysical speculations and inquiries. Another subject of his serious consideration was, the propriety of his becoming a dissenting minister. Accordingly, he entered into an examination of the principles of non-conformity; the result of which was, such a dissatisfaction with them, as determined him to conform to the established church. This intention was, at first, disagreeable to his father, who endeavored to divert him from his purpose; and, with that view, called in the assistance of some eminent presbyterian divines; but finding his son's resolution to be fixed, he at length suffered him to be removed to Oxford, where he was admitted a commoner of Oriel college, on the 17th March, 1714. And what time he took orders doth not appear, nor who the bishop was by whom he was ordained; but it is certain that he entered into the church soon after his admission at Oxford, if it be true, as is asserted, that he sometimes assisted Mr Edward Talbot in the divine service, at his living of Hendred, near Wantage. With this gentleman, who was the second son of Dr William Talbot, successively bishop of Oxford, Salisbury, and Durham, Mr Butler formed an intimate friendship at Oriel college; which friendship laid the foundation of all his subsequent preferments, and procured for him a very honorable station, when he was only twenty six years of age. For it was in 1718 that, at the recommendation of Mr Talbot, in conjunction with that of Dr Clarke, he was appointed by Sir Joseph Jekyll to be preacher at the Rolls. This was three years before he had taken any degree at the University, where he did not go out bachelor of law till the 10th June, 1721, which, however, was as

soon as that degree could suitably be conferred on him. Mr Butler continued at the Rolls till 1726; in the beginning of which year he published, in one volume octavo, "Fifteen Sermons preached at that Chapel." In the meanwhile, by the patronage of Dr Talbot, bishop of Durham, to whose notice he had been recommended (together with Mr Benson and Mr Secker) by Mr Edward Talbot, on his death bed, our author had been presented first to the rectory of Haughton, near Darlington, and afterwards to that of Stanhope, in the same diocese. The benefice of Haughton, was given to him in 1722, and that of Stanhope in 1725. At Haughton there was a necessity for rebuilding a great part of the parsonage house, and Mr Butler had neither money nor talents for that work. Mr Secker, therefore, who had always the interest of his friends at heart, and acquired a very considerable influence with Bishop Talbot, persuaded that prelate to give Mr Butler, in exchange for Haughton, the rectory of Stanhope, which was not only free from any such incumbrance, but was likewise of much superior value, being indeed one of the richest parsonages in England. Whilst our author continued preacher at the Rolls-Chapel, he divided his time between his duty in town and country; but when he quitted the Rolls, he resided, during seven years, wholly at Stanhope, in the conscious discharge of every obligation appertaining to a good parish priest. This retirement, however, was too solitary for his disposition, which had in it a natural cast of gloominess. And though his recluse hours were by no means lost, either to private improvement or public utility, yet he felt at times, very painfully, the want of that select society of friends to which he had been accustomed, and which could inspire him with the greatest cheerfulness. Mr Secker, therefore, who knew this, was extremely anxious to draw him out into a more active and conspicuous scene, and omitted no opportunity of expressing this desire to such as he thought capable of promoting it. Having himself been appointed king's chaplain, in 1732, he took occasion, in a conversation which he had the honor of holding with Queen Caroline, to mention to her his friend Mr Butler. The queen said she thought he had been dead. Mr Secker assured her he was not. Yet her Majesty afterwards asked Archbishop Blackburn if he was not dead; his answer was, "No, madam; but he is buried." Mr Secker continuing his purpose of endeavouring to bring his friend out of his retirement, found

means, upon Mr Charles Talbot's being made lord chancellor, to have Mr Butler recommended to him for his chaplain. His lordship accepted, and sent for him; and this promotion calling him to town, he took Oxford in his way, and was admitted there to the degree of doctor of law, on the 8th December, 1733. The lord chancellor, who gave him also a prebend in the church of Rochester, had consented that he should reside at his parish of Stanhope one half of the year.

Dr Butler being thus brought back into the world, his merit and his talents soon introduced him to particular notice, and paved the way for his rising to those high dignities which he afterwards enjoyed. In 1736 he was appointed clerk of the closet to queen Caroline; and in the same year, he presented to her majesty a copy of his excellent treatise, entitled, "The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature." His attendance upon his royal mistress, by her especial command, was from seven to nine in the evening every day; and though this particular relation to that excellent and learned queen was soon determined by her death in 1737, yet he had been so effectually recommended by her, as well as by the late Lord Chancellor Talbot, to his Majesty's favor, that in the next year he was raised to the highest order of the church, by a nomination to the bishopric of Bristol; to which see he was consecrated on the Third December, 1738. King George II. not being satisfied with this proof of his regard to Dr Butler, promoted him, in 1740, to the deanery of St Paul's, London; into which he was installed on the 24th May in that year. Finding the demands of this dignity to be incompatible with his parish duty at Stanhope, he immediately resigned that rich benefice. Besides our prelate's unremitted attention to his peculiar obligations, he was called upon to preach several discourses on public occasions, which were afterwards separately printed, and have since been annexed to the latter editions of the sermons at the Rolls-Chapel. In 1746, upon the death of Dr Egerton, bishop of Hereford, Dr Butler was made clerk of the closet to the King; and on the 16th October, 1750, he received another distinguished mark of his Majesty's favor, by being translated to the see of Durham. This was on the 16th of October in that year, upon the decease of Dr Edward Chandler. Our prelate being thus appointed to preside over a diocese with which he had long been connected, delivered his first,

and indeed his last charge to his clergy, at his primary visiation in 1751. The principal object of it was, 'External Religion.' The bishop having observed, with deep concern, the great and growing neglect of serious piety in the kingdom, insisted strongly on the usefulness of outward forms and institutions, in fixing and preserving a sense of devotion and duty in the minds of men. In doing this, he was thought by several persons to speak too favourably of Pagan and Popish ceremonies, and to countenance in a certain degree, the cause of superstition. Under that apprehension an able and spirited writer, who was understood to be a clergyman of the Church of England, published in 1752, a pamphlet, entitled, 'A Serious Inquiry into the Use and Importance of External Religion; occasioned by some passages in the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Durham's Charge to the Clergy of that Diocese;—Humbly addressed to his Lordship.' Many persons, however, and we believe the greater part of the Clergy of the diocese, did not think our prelate's Charge so exceptionable as it appeared to this author. The Charge, being printed at Durham, and having never been annexed to any of Dr Butler's other works, is now become extremely scarce; and it is observable, that it is the only one of his publications which ever produced him a direct literary antagonist.*

By this promotion, our worthy bishop was furnished with ample means of exerting the virtue of charity; a virtue which eminently abounded in him, and the exercise of which was his highest delight. But this gratification he did not long enjoy. He had been but a short time seated in his new bishopric, when his health began visibly to decline; and having been complimented, during his indisposition, upon account of his great resignation to the divine will, he is said to have expressed some regret that he should be taken from the present world so soon after he had been rendered capable of becoming much more useful in it. In his last illness he was carried to Bristol, to try the waters of that place; but these proving ineffectual, he removed to Bath, where, being past recovery, he died on the 16th of June, 1752. His corpse was conveyed to Bristol, and interred in the cathedral there, where a monument, with an inscription, is erected to his memory.

On the greatness of Bishop Butler's character we need

* This Charge, with all the rest of Bishop Butler's writings, is included in the present edition of his works.

not enlarge; for his profound knowledge, and the prodig strength of his mind, are amply displayed in his incomp ble writing. His piety was of the most serious and fer and, perhaps somewhat of the ascetic kind. His ben lence was warm, generous, and diffusive. Whilst he bishop of Bristol he expended, in repairing and improving episcopal palace, four thousand pounds, which is sai have been more than the whole revenues of bish amounted to, during his continuance in that see. Beside private benefactions, he was a contributor to the infirma Bristol, and a subscriber to three of the hospitals at Lon He was likewise a principal promoter, though not the founder of the infirmary at Newcastle, in Northumberland supporting the hospitality and dignity of the rich and p erful diocese of Durham, he was desirous of imitating spirit of his patron, Bishop Talbot. In this spirit he apart three days every week for the reception and enter ment of the principal gentry of the country. Nor even the clergy who had the poorest benifices neglected him. He not only occasionally invited them to dine him, but condescended to visit them at their respective ishes. By his will he left five hundred pounds to the S ty for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts and s legacies to his friends and domestics. His executor residuary legatee was his chaplain, the Rev. Dr Nath Forster, a divine of distinguished literature. Bishop B was never married. Soon after his decease, the follo lines, by way of epitaph, were written concerning him; were printed first, if we recollect aright, in the London gazine.

Beneath this marble, Butler lies entombed,
Who, with a soul enflamed by love divine,
His life in presence of his God consumed,
Like the bright lamps before the holy shrine.
His aspect pleasing, mind with learning fraught,
His eloquence was like a chain of gold,
That the wild passions of mankind controlled;
Merit wherever to be found, he sought.
Desire of transient riches he had none;
These he, with bounteous hand, did well dispense
Bent to fulfil the ends of Providence;
His heart still fixed on an immortal crown;
His heart a mirror was, of purest kind,
Where the bright image of his Maker shined;
Reflecting faithful to the throne above,
The arradiant glories of the Mystic Dove.

The following Epitaph, said to be written by Dr Nathaniel Forster, is inscribed on a flat marble stone, in the cathedral church of Bristol, placed over the spot where the remains of Bishop Butler are deposited; and which, as it is now almost obliterated, it may be worth while here to preserve.

H. S.
Reverendus admodum in Christo Pater
JOSEPHUS BUTLER, LL. D.
Hujusce primo Diœceseos
Deinde Dunelmensis Episcopus.
Qualis quantusq; Vir erat
Sua libentissime agnovit ætas:
Et si quid Præsuli aut Scriptori ad famam valeat
Mens altissima,
Ingenii perspicacis et subacti Vis,
Animusq; pius, simplex, candidus, liberalis,
Mortui haud facile evanesceat memoria.
Obiit Bathoniæ 16 Kalend. Julii,
A. D. 1752.
Annos natus 60.

ADVERTISEMENT.

If the reader should meet here with any thing which he had not before attended to, it will not be in the observations upon the constitution and course of nature, these being all obvious; but in the application of them: in which, though there is nothing but what appears to me of some real weight, and therefore, of great importance; yet he will observe several things which will appear to him of very little, if he can think things to be of little importance, which are of any real weight at all, upon such a subject as religion. However, the proper force of the following treatise lies in the whole general analogy considered together.

It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is, now at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it, as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained, but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world. On the contrary, thus much, at least, will be here found, not taken for granted, but proved, that any reasonable man, who will thoroughly consider the matter, may be as much assured, as he is of his own being, that it is not, however, so clear a case, that there is nothing in it. There is, I think, strong evidence of its truth; but it is certain

no one can, upon principles of reason, be satisfied of the contrary. And the practical consequence to be drawn from this, is not attended to, by every one who is concerned in it.

May, 1736.

INTRODUCTION.

PROBABLE evidence is essentially distinguished from demonstrative by this, that it admits of degrees, and of all variety of them, from the highest moral certainty, to the very lowest presumption We cannot, indeed, say a thing is probably true upon one very slight presumption for it; because, as there may be probabilities on both sides of the question, there may be some against it; and though there be not, yet a slight presumption does not beget that degree of conviction, which it implied in saying a thing is probably true. But that the slightest possible presumption is of the nature of a probability, appears from hence, that such low presumption, often repeated, will amount even to moral certainty. Thus, a man's having observed the ebb and flow of the tide to-day, affords some sort of presumption, though the lowest imaginable, that it may happen again to-morrow; but the observation of this event for so many days, and months, and ages together, as it has been observed by mankind, gives us a full assurance that it will.

That which chiefly constitutes *probability*, is expressed in the word *likely*; *i. e.* like some truth,* or true event; like it, in itself, in its evidence, in some more or fewer of its circumstances. For when we determine a thing to be probably true, suppose that an event has or will come to pass, 'tis from the mind's remarking in it a likeness to some other events

* Verisemile.

which we have observed has come to pass. And this observation forms, in numberless daily instances, a presumption, opinion, or full conviction, that such event has or will come to pass; according as the observation is, that the like event has sometimes, most commonly, or always, so far as our observation reaches, come to pass at like distances of time, or place, or upon like occasions. Hence arises the belief, that a child, if it lives twenty years, will grow up to the stature and strength of a man; that food will contribute to the preservation of its life, and the want of it for such a number of days be its certain destruction. So, likewise, the rule and measure of our hopes and fears concerning the success of our pursuits; our expectations that others will act so and so in such circumstances; and our judgment that such actions proceed from such principles; all these rely upon our having observed the like to what we hope, fear, expect, judge; I say upon our having observed the like, either with respect to others or ourselves. And thus, whereas the prince,* who had always lived in a warm climate, naturally concluded, in the way of analogy, that there was no such thing as water's becoming hard, because he had always observed it to be fluid and yielding; we, on the contrary, from analogy, conclude, that there is no presumption at all against this; that it is supposable there may be frost in England any given day in January next; probable, that there will on some day of the month; and that there is a moral certainty, *i. e.* ground for an expectation, without any doubt of it, in some part or other of the winter.

Probable evidence, in its very nature, affords but an imperfect kind of information, and is to be considered as relative only to beings of limited capacities. For nothing which is the possible object of knowledge, whether past, present, or future, can be probable to an infinite intelligence? since it cannot but be discerned absolutely as it is in itself certainly true, or certainly false. But to us, probability is the very guide of life.

From these things it follows, that in questions of difficulty, or such as are thought so, where more satisfactory evidence cannot be had, or is not seen, if the result of examination be, that there appears, upon the whole, any the lowest presumption on one side, and none on the other, or a greater presumption on one side, though in the lowest degree grea-

* The Story is told by Mr Locke, in the chapter of Probability.

s determines the question, even in matters of specu
and, in matters of practice, will lay us under an ab
and formal obligation, in point of prudence and of in
to act upon that presumption, or low probability,
ı it be so low as to leave the mind in a very great
which is the truth. For surely a man is as really
in prudence to do what upon the whole appears, ac
ş to the best of his judgment, to be for his happiness,
ıt he certainly knows to be so. Nay, further, in ques
f great consequence, a reasonable man will think it
ns him to remark lower probabilities and presumptions
ıese; such as amount to no more than showing one
a question to be as supposable and credible as the
nay, such as but amount to much less even than
For numberless instances might be mentioned res
ş the common pursuits of life, where a man would be
ıt, in a literal sense, distracted, who would not act,
ith great application too, not only upon an even
:, but upon much less, and where the probability or
: was greatly against his succeeding.*

not my design to inquire further into the nature, the
tion, and measure of probability; or whence it pro
that *likeness* should beget that presumption, opinion,
ll conviction, which the human mind is formed to re
rom it, and which it does necessarily produce in every
ır to guard against the errors to which reasoning from
:y is liable. This belongs to the subject of logic, and
rt of this subject which has not yet been thoroughly
ered. Indeed I shall not take upon me to say, how
extent, compass, and force, of analogical reasoning
reduced to general heads and rules, and the whole be
into a system. But though so little in this way has
ttempted by those who have treated of our intellectu
ers, and the exercise of them, this does not hinder
ıt we may be, as we unquestionably are, assured, that
:y is of weight, various degrees, towards determining
dgment, and our practice. Nor does it in any wise
:o be of weight in those cases, because persons, either
to dispute, or who require things to be stated with
r exactness than our faculties appear to admit of in
:al matters, may find other cases, in which it is not

* See Chap. vi. Part 2.

easy to say, whether it be, or be not, of any weight: or in stances of seeming analogies, which are really of none. It is enough to the present purpose to observe, that this general way of arguing is evidently natural, just and conclusive. For there is no man can make a question but that the sun will rise to-morrow, and be seen, where it is seen at all, in the figure of a circle, and not in that of a square.

Hence, namely from analogical reasoning, Origen* has with singular sagacity observed, that, 'he who believes the Scriptures to have proceeded from him who is the Author of nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it, as are found in the constitution of nature.' And, in a like way of reflection, it may be added, that he who denies the Scripture to have been from God, upon account of these difficulties, may for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by him. On the other hand, if there be an analogy, or likeness, between that system of things and dispensation of Providence which revelation informs us of, and that system of things and dispensation of Providence which experience, together with reason, informs us of, *i. e.* the known course of nature; this is a presumption, that they have both the same author and cause; at least so far as to answer objections against the former being from God, drawn from any thing which is analogical or similar to what is in the latter, which is acknowledged to be from him; for an Author of nature is here supposed.

Forming our notions of the constitution and government of the world upon reasoning, without foundation for the principles which we assume, whether from the attributes of God, or any thing else, is building a world upon hypothesis, like Des Cartes. Forming our notions upon reasoning from principles which are certain, but applied to cases to which we have no ground to apply them, (like those who explain the structure of the human body, and the nature of diseases and medicines, from mere mathematics, without sufficient *data*) is an error much akin to the former: since what is assumed, in order to make the reasoning applicable, is *hypothesis*. But it must be allowed just, to join abstract reasoning with the observation of facts, and argue from such facts as are known, to others that are like them; from that part of the Divine government over intelligent creatures, which

* Χρη μεν τοι γε τον απαξ παραδεξαμενον τον κτισαντος τον κοσμον ειναι τον της γραφας πεπεισθαι, ὁτι ὁσα περι της κτισεως απαντα τοις ζητουσι την περι αυτης λογον, ταυτα και περι των γραφων. Philocal. p. 23. Ed. Cant.

comes under our view, to that larger and more general government over them which is beyond it; and from what is present, to collect what is likely, credible, or not incredible, will be hereafter.

This method, then, of concluding and determining, being practical, and what, if we will act at all, we cannot but act upon in the common pursuits of life; being evidently conclusive, in various degrees, proportionable to the degree and exactness of the whole analogy or likeness; and having so great authority for its introduction into the subject of religion, even revealed religion, my design is to apply it to that subject in general, both natural and revealed; taking for proved, that there is an intelligent Author of Nature, and natural Governor of the world. For as there is no presumption against this, prior to the proof of it, so it has been often proved with accumulated evidence; from this argument of analogy and final causes; from abstract reasonings; from the most ancient tradition and testimony; and from the general consent of mankind. Nor does it appear, so far as I can find, to be denied by the generality of those who profess themselves dissatisfied with the evidence of religion.

As there are some, who, instead of thus attending to what is in fact the constitution of Nature, form their notions of God's government upon hypothesis; so there are others who indulge themselves in vain and idle speculations, how the world might possibly have been framed otherwise than it is: and upon supposition that things might, in imagining that they should, have been disposed and carried on after a better model, than what appears in the present disposition and conduct of them. Suppose, now, a person of such a turn of mind to go on with his reveries, till he had at length fixed upon some particular plan of Nature, as appearing to him the best,—one shall scarce be thought guilty of detraction against human understanding, if one should say, even beforehand, that the plan which this speculative person would fix upon, though he were the wisest of the sons of men, probably would not be the very best, even according to his own notion of *best;* whether he thought that to be so which afforded occasions and motives for the exercise of the greatest virtue, or which was productive of the greatest happiness, or that these two were necessarily connected, and run up into one and the same plan. However it may not be amiss, once for all, to see what would be

the amount of these emendations and imaginary improvements upon the system of Nature, or how far they would mislead us. And it seems there could be no stopping, till we came to some such conclusions as these:—That all creatures should at first be made as perfect and as happy, as they were capable of ever being; that nothing, to be sure, of hazard or danger should be put upon them to do; some indolent persons would perhaps think. nothing at all; or certainly, that effectual care should be taken, that they should, whether necessary or not, yet eventually and in fact, always do what was right and most conducive to happiness, which would be thought easy for infinite power to effect, either by not giving them any principles which would endanger their going wrong, or by laying the right motive of action in every instance, before their minds continually, in so strong a manner, as would never fail of inducing them to act conformably to it; and that the whole method of government by punishments should be rejected as absurd; as an awkward round-about method of carrying things on; nay, as contrary to a principal purpose, for which it would be supposed creatures were made, namely, happiness.

Now, without considering what is to be said in particular to the several parts of this train of folly and extravagance, what has been above intimated is a full, direct, general answer to it, namely, that we may see beforehand that we have not faculties for this kind of speculation. For though it be admitted, that, from the first principles of our nature, we unavoidably judge or determine some ends to be absolutely in themselves preferable to others, and that the ends now mentioned, or if they run up into one, that this one is absolutely the best, and consequently, that we must conclude the ultimate ends designed in the constitution of nature and conduct of Providence, is the most virtue and happiness possible; yet we are far from being able to judge what particular disposition of things would be most friendly and assistant to virtue, or what means might be absolutely necessary to produce the most happiness in a system of such extent as our own world may be, taking in all that is past and to come, though we should suppose it detached from the whole of things. Indeed, we are so far from being able to judge of this, that we are not judges what may be the necessary means of raising and conducting one person to the highest perfection and happiness

nature. Nay, even in the little affairs of the present
e find men of different education and ranks are not
tent judges of the conduct of each other. Our whole
leads us to ascribe all moral perfection to God, and
y all imperfection in him. And this will forever be a
al proof of his moral character, to such as will con-
what a practical proof is, because it is the voice of
peaking in us. And from hence we conclude, that
must be the happiness, and vice the misery, of every
re; and that regularity, and order, and right, cannot
evail, finally, in a universe under his government.
e are in no sort judges what are the necessary means
mplishing this end.

us, then, instead of that idle and not very innocent
yment of forming imaginary models of a world, and
es of governing it, turn our thoughts to what we ex-
ce to be the conduct of Nature with respect to intelli-
reatures; which may be resolved into general laws
s of administration, in the same way as many of the
f Nature, respecting inanimate matter, may be col-
from experiments. And let us compare the known
tution and course of things with what is said to be the
system of Nature, the acknowledged dispensations of
dence, or that government which we find ourselves
, with what religion teaches us to believe and expect,
ee whether they are not analogous, and of a piece.
pon such a comparison it will, I think, be found, that
re very much so; that both may be traced up to the
general laws, and resolved into the same principles of
e conduct.

e analogy here proposed to be considered, is of pretty
extent, and consists of several parts; in some more,
ers less, exact. In some few instances, perhaps, it
amount to a real practical proof, in others not so; yet
se it is a confirmation of what is proved otherwise. It
ndeniably show, what too many want to have shown
, that the system of religion, both natural and revealed,
dered only as a system, and prior to the proof of it, is
. subject of ridicule, unless that of nature be so too.
it will afford an answer to almost all objections against
ystem both of natural and of revealed religion, though
erhaps an answer in so great a degree, yet in a very
derable degree an answer, to the objections against the
nce of it; for, objections against a proof, and objections

against what is said to be proved, the reader will observe are different things.

Now, the divine government of the world, implied in the notion of religion in general, and of Christianity, contains in it,—That mankind is appointed to live in a future state;* that there every one shall be rewarded or punished; † rewarded or punished respectively for all that behaviour here which we comprehend under the words, virtuous or vicious, morally good or evil: ‡ that our present life is a probation, a state of trial, § and of discipline, ‖ for that future one; notwithstanding the objections which men may fancy they have, from notions of necessity, against there being any such moral plan as this at all; ¶ and whatever objections may appear to lie against the wisdom and goodness of it, as it stands so imperfectly made known to us at present: ** that this world being in a state of apostacy and wickedness, and consequently of ruin, and the sense both of their condition and duty being greatly corrupted amongst men, this gave occasion for an additional dispensation of Providence, of the utmost importance, †† proved by miracles, ‡‡ but containing in it many things appearing to us strange, and not to have been expected; §§ a dispensation of Providence, which is a scheme or system of things ‖‖ carried on by the mediation of a Divine person, the Messiah, in order to the recovery of the world: ¶¶ yet not revealed to all men, nor proved with the strongest possible evidence to all those to whom it is revealed; but only to such a part of mankind, and with such particular evidence, as the wisdom of God thought fit.*** The design, then, of the following Treatise will be to show, that the several parts principally objected against in his moral and Christian dispensation, including its scheme, its publication, and the proof which God has afforded us of its truth; that the particular parts principally objected against in this whole dispensation, are analogous to what is experienced in the constitution and course of Nature, or Providence; that the chief objections themselves, which are alleged against the former, are no other than what may be alleged with like justness against the latter, where they are found in fact to be inconclusive; and that this argument from analogy, is in general unanswerable, and undoubtedly

*Ch. i.	†Ch. ii.	‡Ch. iii.
§Ch. iv.	‖Ch. v.	¶Ch vi.
**Ch. vii	††Part II. ch. i.	‡‡Ch. ii.
§§Ch. iii.	‖‖Ch. iv. ¶¶Ch. v.	***Ch. vi. vii.

of weight on the side of religion,* notwithstanding the objections which may seem to lie against it, and the real ground which there may be for difference of opinion as to the particular degree of weight which is to be laid upon it. This is a general account of what may be looked for in the following Treatise. And I shall begin it with that which is the foundation of all our hopes, and of all our fears—all our hopes and fears, which are of any consideration—I mean, a future life.

* Ch. viii.

THE ANALOGY OF RELIGION TO THE STITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE.

PART I.

OF NATURAL RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

Of a Future Life.

ANGE difficulties have been raised by some concern- sonal identity, or the sameness of living agents, im- the notion of our existing now and hereafter, or in o successive moments; which whoever thinks it while, may see considered in the first Dissertation at d of this Treatise. But, without regard to any of ere, let us consider what the analogy of Nature, and eral changes which we have undergone, and those we know we may undergo without being destroyed, t, as to the effect which death may, or may not, pon us; and whether it be not from thence probable, e may survive this change, and exist in a future state nd perception.

rom our being born into the present world in the help- perfect state of infancy, and having arrived from to mature age, we find it to be a general law of nature own species, that the same creatures, the same

individuals, should exist in degrees of life and perception, with capacities of action, of enjoyment, and suffering, in one period of their being, greatly different from those appointed them in another period of it. And in other creatures the same law holds. For the difference of their capacities and states of life at their birth (to go no higher) and in maturity; the change of worms into flies, and the vast enlargement of their locomotive powers by such change; and birds and insects bursting the shell, their habitation, and by this means entering into a new world, furnished with new accommodations for them; and finding a new sphere of action assigned them;—these are instances of this general law of nature. Thus, all the various and wonderful transformations of animals are to be taken into consideration here. But the states of life in which we ourselves existed formerly, in the womb and in our infancy, are almost as different from our present, in mature age, as it is possible to conceive any two states or degrees of life can be. Therefore, that we are to exist hereafter in a state as different (suppose) from our present, as this is from our former, is but according to the analogy of nature; according to a natural order or appointment, of the very same kind with what we have already experienced.

II. We know we are endued with capacities of action, of happiness, and misery; for we are conscious of acting, of enjoying pleasure, and suffering pain. Now, that we have these powers and capacities before death, is a presumption that we shall retain them through and after death; indeed, a probability of it abundantly sufficient to act upon, unless there be some positive reason to think that death is the destruction of those living powers; because there is in every case a probability, that all things will continue as we experience they are, in all respects, except those in which we have some reason to think they will be altered. This is that *kind** of presumption, or probability, from analogy, expressed in the very word *continuance*, which seems our only natural reason for believing the course of the world will continue to-morrow, as it has done so far as our experience or knowledge of history can carry us back. Nay, it seems our only reason for believing, that any one substance, now

* I say *kind* of presumption or probability; for I do not mean to affirm, that there is the same *degree* of conviction that our living powers will continue after death, as there is, that our subsistences will.

existing, will continue to exist a moment longer; the self-existent substance only excepted. Thus, if men were assured that the unknown event, death, was not the destruction of our faculties of perception and of action, there would be no apprehension that any other power or event, unconnected with this of death, would destroy these faculties just at the instant of each creature's death; and therefore no doubt but that they would remain after it: which shows the high probability that our living powers will continue after death, unless there be some ground to think that death is their destruction.* For, if it would be in a manner certain that we should survive death, provided it were certain that death would not be our destruction, it must be highly probable we shall survive it, if there be no ground to think death will be our destruction.

Now, though I think it must be acknowledged, that prior to the natural and moral proofs of a future life commonly insisted upon, there would arise a general confused suspicion, that, in the great shock and alteration which we shall undergo by death, we, *i. e.* our living powers, might be wholly destroyed; yet even prior to those proofs, there is really no particular distinct ground, or reason, for this apprehension at all, so far as I can find. If there be, it must arise either from *the reason of the thing*, or from *the analogy of Nature.*

But we cannot argue from *the reason of the thing*, that death is the destruction of living agents, because we know not at all what death is in itself; but only some of its effects, such as the dissolution of flesh, skin, and bones: and these effects do in no wise appear to imply the destruction of a living agent. And, besides, as we are greatly in the dark upon what the exercise of our living powers depends, so we are wholly ignorant what the powers themselves depend upon; the powers themselves, as distinguished, not only

* *Destruction of living powers*, is a manner of expression unavoidably ambiguous; and may signify either *the destruction of a living being, so as that the same living being shall be incapable of ever perceiving or acting again at all*; or *the destruction of those means and instruments by which it is capable of its present life, of its present state of perception and of action.* It is here used in the former sense. When it is used in the latter, the epithet *present* is added. The loss of a man's eye is a destruction of living powers in the latter sense. But we have no reason to think the destruction of living powers, in the former sense, to be possible. We have no more reason to think a being, endued with living powers, ever loses them during its whole existence, than to believe that a stone ever acquires them.

from their actual exercise, but also from the present capacity of exercising them; and opposed to their destruction; for sleep, or, however, a swoon, shows us, not only that these powers exist when they are not exercised, as the passive power of motion does in inanimate matter; but shows also that they exist, when there is no present capacity of exercising them; or that the capacities of exercising them for the present, as well as the actual exercise of them, may be suspended, and yet the powers themselves remain undestroyed. Since, then, we know not at all upon what the existence of our living powers depends, this shows further, there can no probability be collected from the reason of the thing, that death will be their destruction: because their existence may depend upon somewhat in no degree affected by death; upon somewhat quite out of the reach of this king of terrors. So that there is nothing more certain, than that *the reason of the thing* shows us no connexion between death and the destruction of living agents. Nor can we find any thing throughout the whole *analogy of Nature*, to afford us even the slightest presumption, that animals ever lose their living powers; much less, if it were possible, that they lose them by death; for we have no faculties wherewith to trace any beyond or through it, so as to see what becomes of them. This event removes them from our view. It destroys the *sensible* proof, which we had before their death, of their being possessed of living powers, but does not appear to afford the least reason to believe, that they are then, or by that event, deprived of them.

And our knowing, that they were possessed of these powers, up to the very period to which we have faculties capable of tracing them, is itself a probability of their retaining them beyond it. And this is confirmed, and a sensible credibility is given to it, by observing the very great and astonishing changes which we have experienced; so great, that our existence in another state of life, of perception and of action, will be but according to a method of providential conduct, the like to which has been already exercised, even with regard to ourselves; according to a course of nature, the like to which we have already gone through.

However, as one cannot but be greatly sensible, how difficult it is to silence imagination enough to make the voice of reason even distinctly heard in this case; as we are accustomed, from our youth up, to indulge that forward delusive faculty, ever obtruding beyond its sphere; of some

assistance, indeed, to apprehension, but the author of all error: as we plainly lose ourselves in gross and crude conceptions of things, taking for granted that we are acquainted with what indeed we are wholly ignorant of; it may be proper to consider the imaginary presumptions, that death will be our destruction, arising from these kinds of early and lasting prejudices; and to show how little they can really amount to, even though we cannot wholly divest ourselves of them. And

1. All presumption of death's being the destruction of living beings, must go upon supposition that they are compounded, and so discerptible. But, since consciousness is a single and individual power, it should seem that the subject in which it resides, must be so too. For, were the motion of any particle of matter absolutely one and indivisible, so as that it should imply a contradiction to suppose part of this motion to exist, and part not to exist *i. e.* part of this matter to move, and part to be at rest; then its power of motion would be indivisible; and so also would the subject in which the power inheres, namely, the particle of matter: for, if this could be divided into two, one part might be moved and the other at rest, which is contrary to the supposition. In like manner, it has been argued,* and, for any thing appearing to the contrary, justly, that since the perception, or consciousness, which we have of our own existence is indivisible, so as that it is a contradiction to suppose one part of it should be here and the other there; the perceptive power, or the power of consciousness, is indivisible too; and, consequently, the subject in which it resides, *i. e.* the conscious being. Now, upon supposition that living agent each man calls himself, is thus a single being, which there is at least no more difficulty in conceiving than in conceiving it to be a compound, and of which there is the proof now mentioned; it follows, that our organized bodies are no more ourselves, or part of ourselves, than any other matter around us. And it is as easy to conceive how matter, which is no part of ourselves, may be appropriated to us in the manner which our present bodies are, as how we can receive impressions from, and have power over any matter. It is as easy to conceive, that we may exist out of bodies, as in them; that we might have animated bodies of any other organs and senses wholly different from these now given us, and that

* See Dr Clarke's Letter to Mr Dodwell, and the Defences of it.

we may hereafter animate these same or new bodies cusly modified and organized, as to conceive how we animate such bodies as our present. And, lastly, the d lution of all these several organized bodies, supposing selves to have successively animated them, would hav more conceivable tendency to destroy the living beings, selves, or deprive us of living faculties, the faculties of ception and of action, than the dissolution of any for matter, which we are capable of receiving impressions f and making use of for the common occasions of life.

II. The simplicity and absolute oneness of a living a cannot, indeed, from the nature of the thing, be proj proved by experimental observations. But as these in with the supposition of its unity. so they plainly lea to *conclude* certainly, that our gross organized bodies, which we perceive the objects of sense, and with whicl act, are no part of ourselves, and therefore show us, we have no reason to believe their destruction to be o even without determining whether our living substance material or immaterial. For we see by experience, men may lose their limbs, their organs of sense, and the greatest part of these bodies, and yet remain the s living agents: And persons can trace up the existenc themselves to a time when the bulk of their bodies was tremely small, in comparison of what it is in mature and we cannot but think, that they might then have l considerable part of that small body, and yet have rema the same living agents, as they may now lose great pa their present body, and remain so. And it is certain, the bodies of all animals are in a constant flux, from never ceasing attrition which there is in every part of tl Now, things of this kind unavoidably teach us to disting between these living agents, ourselves, and large quant of matter, in which we are very nearly interested: s these may be alienated, and actually are in a daily co of succession, and changing their owners; whilst we assured, that each living agent remains one and the s permanent being.* And this general observation leads on to the following ones.

First, That we have no way of determining by e: rience, what is the certain bulk of the living being e man calls himself; and yet, till it be determined that i

* See Dissertation I.

r in bulk than the solid elementary particles of matter, h there is no ground to think any natural power can lve, there is no sort of reason to think death to be the lution of it, of the living being, even though it should e absolutely indiscerptible.

condly, From our being so nearly related to, and inter- in certain systems of matter, suppose our flesh and s, afterwards ceasing to be at all related to them, the g agents, ourselves, remaining all this while undestroy- notwithstanding such alienations: and consequently systems of matter not being ourselves; it follows fur- that we have no ground to conclude any other, suppose *ral systems* of matter, to be the living agents ourselves; use we can have no ground to conclude this, but from elation to, and interest in such other systems of matter: therefore, we can have no reason to conclude, what ls those systems of matter at death, to be the destruction e living agents. We have already, several times over, great part, or perhaps the whole of our body, accord- o certain common established laws of nature; yet we in the same living agents: when we shall lose as great t, or the whole, by another common established law of e, death, why may we not also remain the same? the alienation has been gradual in one case, and in the will be more at once, does not prove any thing to the ary. We have passed undestroyed through those and great revolutions of matter, so peculiarly appro- ed to ourselves; why should we imagine death would fatal to us? Nor can it be objected, that what is thus ated, or lost, is no part of our original solid body, but adventitious matter; because we may lose entire limbs, h must have contained many solid parts and vessels of riginal body: or if this be not admitted, we have no that any of these solid parts are dissolved or alienated eath; though, by the way, we are very nearly related at extraneous or adventitious matter, whilst it continues d to and distending the several parts of our solid body. after all, the relation a person bears to those parts of ody to which he is the most nearly related, what does pear to amount to but this, that the living agent and parts of the body mutually affect each other? And same thing, the same thing in kind, though not in de- may be said of *all foreign* matter, which gives us , and which we have any power over. From these

observations the whole ground of the imagination is rer
ed, that the dissolution of any matter is the destructio
a living agent, from the interest he once had in such ma

Thirdly, If we consider our body somewhat more dist
ly, as made up of organs and instruments of perception
of motion, it will bring us to the same conclusion. T
the common optical experiments show, and even the ol
vation how sight is assisted by glasses shows, that we
with our eyes in the same sense as we see with gla
Nor is there any reason to believe, that we see with ther
any other sense; any other, I mean, which would lead
to think the eye itself a percipient. The like is to be
of hearing: and our feeling distant solid matter by m
of somewhat in our hand, seems an instance of the like k
as to the subject we are considering. All these are instar
of foreign matter, or such as is no part of our body, b
instrumental in preparing objects for, and conveying ther
the perceiving power, in a manner similar, or like to
manner in which our organs of sense prepare and con
them. Both are, in a like way, instruments of our rec
ing such ideas from external objects, as the Author of
ture appointed those external objects to be the occasion
exciting in us. However, glasses are evidently instar
of this; namely, of matter, which is no part of our body,
paring objects for, and conveying them towards the per
ing power, in like manner as our bodily organs do. An
we see with our eyes only in the same manner as we do
glasses, the like may justly be concluded from analogy
all our other senses. It is not intended, by any thing
said, to affirm, that the whole apparatus of vision, or of
ception by any other of our senses, can be traced, thro
all its steps, quite up to the living power of seeing, or
ceiving; but that, so far as it can be traced by experime
observations, so far it appears, that our organs of sense
pare and convey on objects, in order to their being percei
in like manner as foreign matter does, without affording
shadow of appearance, that they themselves perceive.
that we have no reason to think our organs of sense p
pients, is confirmed by instances of persons losing som
them, the living beings themselves, their former occup
remaining unimpaired. It is confirmed also by the ex
ence of dreams; by which we find we are at present
sessed of a latent, and what would otherwise be an un
gined unknown power of perceiving sensible objects, in

and lively a manner without our external organs of as with them.

also with regard to our power, of moving, or directing by will and choice: upon the destruction of a limb, tive power remains, as it evidently seems, unlessened; hat the living being, who has suffered this loss, would able of moving as before, if it had another limb to with. It can walk by the help of an artificial leg, it can make use of a pole or a lever, to reach towards and to move things beyond the length and the power natural arm: and this last it does in the same manner eaches and moves, with its natural arm, things nearer less weight. Nor is there so much as any appear- f our limbs being endued with a power of moving or ng themselves; though they are adapted, like the se- parts of a machine, to be the instruments of motion to ther; and some parts of the same limb, to be instru- of motion to the other parts of it.

is, a man determines that he will look at such an ob- rough a microscope; or, being lame suppose, that he alk to such a place with a staff a week hence. His nd his feet no more determine in these cases, than the cope and the staff. Nor is there any ground to think ny more put the determination in the practice, or that es are the seers, or his feet the movers, in any other than as the microscope and the staff are. Upon the , then, our organs of sense and our limbs are certainly ments, which the living persons, ourselves, make use perceive and move with. There is not any probability, hey are any more; nor, consequently, that we have her kind of relation to them, than what we may have other foreign matter formed into instruments of per- n and motion, suppose into a microscope or a staff (I ny other kind of relation, for I am not speaking of the of it; nor, consequently, is there any probability, ne alienation or dissolution of these instruments is the ction of the perceiving and moving agent.

l thus our finding, that the dissolution of matter in living beings were most nearly intercsted, is not their ition; and that the destruction of several of the or- nd instruments of perception and of motion belong- them, is not their destruction; shows, demonstrative- t there is no ground to think, that the dissolution f other matter or destruction of any other organs

and instruments, will be the dissolution or destruction of living agents, from the like kind of relation. And we have no reason to think we stand in any other kind of relation to any thing which we find dissolved by death.

But it is said, these observations are equally applicable to brutes; and it is thought an insuperable difficulty, that they should be immortal, and, by consequence, capable of everlasting happiness. Now, this manner of expression is both invidious and weak: but the thing intended by it, is really no difficulty at all, either in the way of natural or moral consideration. For, 1st, Suppose the invidious thing designed in such a manner of expression, were really implied, as it is not in the least, in the natural immortality of brutes; namely, that they must arrive at great attainments, and become rational and moral agents; even this would be no difficulty, since we know not what latent powers and capacities they may be endued with. There was once, prior to experience, as great presumption against human creatures, as there is against the brute creatures, arriving at that degree of understanding which we have in mature age; for we can trace up our own existance to the same original with theirs. And we find it to be a general law of nature, that creatures endued with capacities of virtue and religion, should be placed in a condition of being, in which they are altogether without the use of them for a considerable length of their duration, as in infancy and childhood. And great part of the human species go out of the present world, before they come to the exercise of these capacities in any degree at all. But then, 2dly, The natural immortality of brutes does not in the least imply, that they are endued with any latent capacities of a rational or moral nature. And the economy of the universe might require, that there should be living creatures without any capacities of this kind. And all difficulties, as to the manner how they are to be disposed of, are so apparently and wholly founded on our ignorance, that it is wonderful they should be insisted upon by any but such as are weak enough to think they are acquainted with the whole system of things. There is, then, absolutely nothing at all in this objection, which is so rhetorically urged against the greatest part of the natural proofs or presumptions of the immortality of human minds: I say the greatest part; for it is less applicable to the following observation, which is more peculiar to mankind:—

III. That as it is evident our *present* powers and capaci

ties of reason, memory, and affection, do not depend upon our gross body, in the manner in which perception by our organs of sense does; so they do not appear to depend upon it at all in any such manner, as to give ground to think, that the dissolution of this body will be the destruction of these our *present* powers of reflection, as it will of our powers of sensation; or to give ground to conclude, even that it will be so much as a suspension of the former.

Human creatures exist at present in two states of life and perception, greatly different from each other; each of which has its own peculiar laws, and its own peculiar enjoyments and sufferings. When any of our senses are affected, or appetites gratified with the objects of them, we may be said to exist, or live, in a state of sensation. When none of our senses are affected, or appetites gratified, and yet we perceive, and reason, and act, we may be said to exist, or live, in a state of reflection. Now it is by no means certain, that any thing which is dissolved by death is any way necessary to the living being, in this its state of reflection, after ideas are gained. For though, from our present constitution and condition of being, our external organs of sense are necessary for conveying in ideas to our reflecting powers, as carriages, and levers, and scaffolds are in architecture; yet, when these ideas are brought in, we are capable of reflecting in the most intense degree, and of enjoying the greatest pleasure, and feeling the greatest pain, by means of that reflection, without any assistance from our senses; and without any at all, which we know of, from that body, which will be dissolved by death. It does not appear, then, that the relation of this gross body to the reflecting being, is in any degree, necessary to thinking; to our intellectual enjoyments or sufferings: nor, consequently, that the dissolution, or alienation of the former by death, will be the destruction of those present powers, which render us capable of this state of reflection. Further, there are instances of moral diseases, which do not at all affect our present intellectual powers; and this affords a presumption, that those diseases will not destroy these present powers. Indeed, from the observations made above, it appears, that there is no presumption, from their mutually affecting each other, that the dissolution of the body is the destruction of

the living agent. And by the same reasoning it must appear, too, that there is no presumption, from their mutually affecting each other, that the dissolution of the body is the destruction of our present reflecting powers; but instances of their not affecting each other, afford a presumption of the contrary. Instances of mortal disease not impairing our present reflecting powers, evidently turn our thoughts even from imagining such diseases to be the destruction of them. Several things, indeed, greatly affect all our living powers, and at length, suspend the exercise of them; as, for instance, drowsiness, increasing till it ends in sound sleep: and from hence we might have imagined it would destroy them, till we found, by experience, the weakness of this way of judging. But, in the diseases now mentioned, there is not so much as the shadow of probability, to lead us to any such conclusion, as to the reflecting powers which we have at present; for, in those diseases, persons the moment before death appear to be in the highest vigor of life. They discover apprehension, memory, reason, all entire; with the utmost force of affection; sense of a character, of shame and honor; and the highest mental enjoyments and sufferings, even to the last gasp: and these surely prove even greater vigor of life than bodily strength does. Now, what pretence is there for thinking, that a progressive disease, when arrived to such a degree, I mean that degree which is mortal, will destroy those powers, which were not impaired, which were not affected by it, during its whole progress, quite up to that degree? And if death, by diseases of this kind, is not the destruction of our present reflecting powers, it will scarce be thought that death by any other means is.

It is obvious that this general observation may be carried on further: and there appears so little connexion between our bodily powers of sensation, and our present powers of reflection, that there is no reason to conclude that death, which destroys the former, does so much as suspend the exercise of the latter, or interrupt our *continuing* to exist in the like state of reflection which we do now. For, suspension of reason, memory, and the affections which they excite, is no part of the idea of death, nor is implied in our notion of it. And our daily experiencing these powers to be exercised, without any assistance, that we know of, from those bodies which will be dissolved by death; and our finding often, that the exercise of them is so lively to the last;—*these things* afford a sensible apprehension, that death may

not perhaps be so much as a discontinuance of the exercise of these powers, nor of the enjoyments and sufferings which it implies;* so that our posthumous life, whatever there may be in it additional to our present, yet may not be entirely beginning anew, but going on. Death may, in some sort, and in some respects, answer to our birth, which is not a suspension of the faculties which we had before it, or a total change of the state of life in which we existed when in the womb, but a continuation of both, with such and such great alterations.

Nay, for ought we know of ourselves, of our present life, and of death, death may immediately, in the natural course of things, put us into a higher and more enlarged state of life, as our birth does ;† a state in which our capacities and sphere of perception, and of action, may be much greater than at present. For, as our relation to our external organs of sense renders us capable of existing in our present state of sensation, so it may be the only natural hindrance to our existing, immediately and of course, in a higher state of reflection. The truth is, reason does not at all show us in what state death naturally leaves us. But were we sure that it would suspend all our perceptive and active powers, yet the suspension of a power, and the destruction of it, are effects so totally different in kind, as we experience from sleep and a swoon, that we cannot in any wise argue from one to the other ; or conclude, even to the lowest degree of probability, that the same kind of force which is sufficient to suspend our faculties, though it be increased ever so much, will be sufficient to destroy them.

These observations together may be sufficient to show, how little presumption there is that death is the destruction

* There are three distinct questions, relating to a future life, here considered: Whether death be the destruction of living agents? If not, Whether it be the destruction of their *present* powers of reflection, as it certainly is the destruction of their present powers of sensation? And if not, Whether it be the suspension, or discontinuance of the exercise, of those present reflecting powers? Now, if there be no reason to believe the last, there will be, if that were possible, less for the next, and less still for the first.

† This, according to Strabo, was the opinion of the Brahmans: *νομιζειν μεν γαρ δη τον μεν ενθαδε βιον, ὡς εν ακμην κνομενων ειναι· τον δε θανατον, γενεσις εις τον οντως βιον, και τον ευδαιμονα τοις φιλοσοφησασι.* Lib. XV. p. 1039. Ed. Amst. 1707. To which opinion perhaps Antoninus may allude in these words, *ὡς νυν περιμενεις, ποτε εμβρυον εκ της γαστρος της γυναικος σε εξελθη, ουτως εκδεχεσθαι την ωραν εν ᾗ το ψυχαριον σε τε ελυτρα ταυτα αποθετεται.* Lib. IX. c. 3.

of human creatures. However, there is the shadow of an analogy, which may lead us to imagine it is; the supposed likeness which is observed between the decay of vegetables and of living creatures. And this likeness is indeed sufficient to afford the poets very apt allusions to the flowers of the field, in their pictures of the frailty of our present life. But, in reason, the analogy is so far from holding, that there appears no ground even for the comparison, as to the present question; because one of the two subjects compared is wholly void of that, which is the principle and chief thing in the other, the power of perception and action; and which is the only thing we are inquiring about the continuance of. So that the destruction of a vegetable is an event not similar, or analogous, to the destruction of a living agent.

But if, as was above intimated, leaving off the delusive custom of substituting imagination in the room of experience, we would confine ourselves to what we do know and understand; if we would argue only from that, and from that form our expectations, it would appear, at first sight, that as no probability of living beings ever ceasing to be so, can be concluded from the reason of the thing; so none can be collected from the analogy of nature; because we cannot trace any living beings beyond death. But as we are conscious that we are endued with capacities of perception and of action, and are living persons, what we are to go upon is, that we shall continue so till we foresee some accident, or event, which will endanger those capacities, or be likely to destroy us; which death does in no wise appear to be.

And thus, when we go out of this world, we may pass into new scenes, and a new state of life and action, just as naturally as we came into the present. And this new state may naturally be a social one. And the advantages of it, advantages of every kind, may naturally be bestowed, according to some fixed general laws of wisdom, upon every one in proportion to the degrees of his virtue. And though the advantages of that future natural state should not be bestowed, as these of the present in some measure are, by the will of the society, but entirely by his more immediate action, upon whom the whole frame of nature depends, yet this distribution may be just as natural, as their being distributed here by the instrumentality of men. And, indeed, though one were to allow any confused undetermined sense, which people please to put *upon the* word *natural*, it would be a shortness of thought

scarce credible to imagine, that no system or course of things can be so, but only what we see at present;* especially whilst the probability of a future life, or the natural immortality of the soul, is admitted upon the evidence of reason; because this is really both admitting and denying at once, a state of being different from the present to be natural. But the only distinct meaning of that word is, *stated, fixed,* or *settled;* since what is natural as much requires, and presupposes an intelligent agent to render it so, *i. e.* to effect it continually, or at stated times, as what is supernatural or miraculous does to effect it for once. And from hence it must follow, that persons' notion of what is natural will be enlarged, in proportion to their greater knowledge of the works of God and the dispensations of his Providence. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing, that there may be beings in the universe, whose capacities, and knowledge, and views, may be so extensive, as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural, *i. e.* analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of his creation, as natural as the visible known course of things appears to us. For there seems scarce any other possible sense to be put upon the word, but that only in which it is here used; similar, stated, or uniform.

This credibility of a future life, which has been here insisted upon, how little soever it may satisfy our curiosity, seems to answer all the purposes of religion, in like manner as a demonstrative proof would. Indeed, a proof, even a demonstrative one, of a future life, would not be a proof of religion. For, that we are to live hereafter, is just as reconcilable with the scheme of atheism, and as well to be accounted for by it, as that we are now alive is; and therefore nothing can be more absurd than to argue from that scheme, that there can be no future state. But as religion implies a future state, any presumption against such a state is a presumption against religion. And the foregoing observations remove all presumptions of that sort, and prove, to a very considerable degree of probability, one fundamental doctrine of religion; which if believed, would greatly open and dispose the mind seriously to attend to the general evidence of the whole

* See Part ii. ch. 2. and Part ii. ch. 3.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Government of God by Rewards and Punishments; and particularly of the latter.

THAT which makes the question concerning a future life to be of so great importance to us, is our capacity of happiness and misery. And that which makes the consideration of it to be of so great importance to us, is the supposition of our happiness and misery hereafter, depending upon our actions here. Without this, indeed, curiosity could not but sometimes bring a subject, in which we may be so highly interested, to our thoughts; especially upon the mortality of others, or the near prospect of our own. But reasonable men would not take any farther thought about hereafter, than what should happen thus occasionally to rise in their minds, if it were certain that our future interest no way depend upon our present behaviour; whereas, on the contrary, if there be ground, either from analogy or any thing else, to think it does, then there is reason also for the most active thought and solicitude to secure that interest; to behave so as that we may escape that misery, and obtain that happiness in another life, which we not only suppose ourselves capable of, but which we apprehend also is put in our own power. And whether there be ground for this last apprehension, certainly would deserve to be most seriously considered, were there no other proof of a future life, and interest than that presumptive one which the foregoing observations amount to.

Now, in the present state, all which we enjoy, and a great part of what we suffer, *is put in our own power.* For pleasure and pain are the consequences of our actions; and we are endued by the Author of our nature with capacities of foreseeing these consequences. We find, by experience, he does not so much as preserve our lives exclusively of our own care and attention to provide ourselves with, and to make

if, that sustenance, by which he has appointed our lives be preserved, and without which he has appointed they not be preserved at all. And in general we foresee, that external things, which are the objects of our various pas-, can neither be obtained nor enjoyed, without exerting elves in such and such manners; but by thus exerting elves, we obtain and enjoy, these objects, in which our ral good consists, or by this means God gives us the pos-on and enjoyment of them. I know not that we have one kind or degree of enjoyment, but by the means of own actions. And by prudence and care, we may, for nost part, pass our days in tolerable ease and quiet: or, ie contrary, we may, by rashness, ungoverned passion, ilness, or even by negligence, make ourselves as misera-s ever we please. And many do please to make them-s extremely miserable, *i. e.* to do what they know be-and will render them so. They follow those ways, the of which they know, by instruction, example, experi-, will be disgrace, and, poverty, and sickness, and nely death. This every one observes to be the general se of things; though it is to be allowed, we cannot find xperience, that all our sufferings are owing to our own s.

Why the Author of Nature does not give his creatures iscuously such and such perceptions, without regard to behaviour; why he does not make them happy with-the instrumentality of their own actions, and prevent bringing any sufferings upon themselves, is another er. Perhaps there may be some impossibilities in the re of things, which we are unacquainted with;* Or less iness, it may be, would, upon the whole, be produced ich a method of conduct, than is by the present: Or, aps, divine goodness, with which, if I mistake not, we e very free in our speculations, may not be a bare single sition to produce happiness; but a disposition to make good, the faithful, the honest man, happy. Perhaps an itely perfect Mind may be pleased with seeing his crea behave suitably to the nature which he has given them; e relations which he has placed them in to each other; to that which they stand in to himself; that relation to elf, which, during their existence, is even necessary, and h is the most important one of all. Perhaps, I say, an

* Part i. chap. 7

infinitely perfect Mind may be pleased with this moral piety of moral agents, in and for itself, as well as upon account of its being essentially conducive to the happiness of his creation. Or the whole end, for which God made, and thus governs the world, may be utterly beyond the reach of our faculties: There may be somewhat in it as impossible for us to have any conception of, as for a blind man to have a conception of colors. But however this be, it is certain matter of universal experience, that the general method of divine administration is, forewarning us, or giving us capacities to foresee, with more or less clearness, that if we act so and so, we shall have such enjoyments, if so and so, such sufferings; and giving us those enjoyments, and making us feel those sufferings, in consequence of our actions.

'But all this is to be ascribed to the general course of nature.' True. This is the very thing which I am observing. It is to be ascribed to the general course of nature; *i. e.* not surely to the words, or ideas, *Course of nature*, but to him who appointed it, and put things into it; or to a course of operation, from its uniformity or consistency, called natural, and which necessarily implies an operating agent. For when men find themselves necessitated to confess an Author of Nature, or that God is the natural governor of the world, they must not deny this again, because his government is uniform; they must not deny that he does all things at all, because he does them constantly; because the effects of his acting are permanent, whether his acting be so or not; though there is no reason to think it is not. In short, every man, in every thing he does, naturally acts upon the forethought and apprehension of avoiding evil, or obtaining good: and if the natural course of things be the appointment of God, and our natural faculties of knowledge and experience are given us by him, then the good and bad consequences which follow our actions are his appointment, and our foresight of those consequences is a warning given us by him, how we are to act.

'Is the pleasure, then, naturally accompanying every particular gratification of passion, intended to put us upon gratifying ourselves in every such particular instance, and as a reward to us for so doing?' No, certainly. Nor is it to be said, that our eyes were naturally intended to give us the sight of each particular object to which they do or can ex

tend; objects which are destructive of them, or which, for any other reason, it may become us to turn our eyes from. Yet there is no doubt, but that our eyes were intended for us to see with. So neither is there any doubt, but that the foreseen pleasures and pains, belonging to the passions, were intended, in general, to induce mankind to act in such and such manners.

Now, from this general observation, obvious to every one that God has given us to understand he has appointed satisfaction and delight to be the consequence of our acting in one manner, and pain and uneasiness of our acting in another, and of our not acting at all; and that we find the consequences, which we were beforehand informed of, uniformly to follow; we may learn, that we are at present actually under his government, in the strictest and most proper sense; in such a sense, as that he rewards and punishes us for our actions. An Author of Nature being supposed, it is not so much a deduction of reason as a matter of experience, that we are thus under his government: under his government, in the same sense as we are under the government of civil magistrates. Because the annexing pleasure to some actions, and pain to others, in our power to do or forbear, and giving notice of this appointment beforehand to those whom it concerns, is the proper formal notion of government. Whether the pleasure or pain which thus follows upon our behaviour, be owing to the Author of Nature's acting upon us every moment which we feel it, or to his having at once contrived and executed his own part in the plan of the world, makes no alteration as to the matter before us. For, if civil magistrates could make the sanction of their laws take place, without interposing at all, after they had passed them; without a trial, and the formalities of an execution: if they were able to make their laws execute them themselves or every offender to execute them upon himself, we should be just in the same sense under their government then, as we are now; but in a much higher degree, and more perfect manner. Vain is the ridicule with which one foresees some persons will divert themselves, upon finding lesser pains considered as instances of divine punishment. There is no possibility of answering or evading the general thing here intended, without denying all final causes. For, final causes being admitted, the pleasures and pains now mentioned must be admitted too, as instances of them. And if they are; if God annex-

es deligh. to some actions and uneasiness to others, with an apparent design to induce us to act so and so, then he not only dispenses happiness and misery, but also rewards and punishes actions. If, for example, the pain which we feel upon doing what tends to the destruction of our bodies, suppose upon too near approaches to fire, or upon wounding ourselves, be appointed by the Author of Nature to prevent our doing what thus tends to our destruction; this is altogether as much an instance of his punishing our actions, and consequently of our being under his government, as declaring, by a voice from heaven, that if we acted so, he would inflict such pain upon us, and inflicting it whether it be greater or less.

Thus we find, that the true notion or conception of the Author of Nature, is that of a master or governor, prior to the consideration of his moral attributes. The fact of our case, which we find by experience, is, that he actually exercises dominion or government over us at present, by rewarding and punishing us for our actions, in as strict and proper a sense of these words, and even in the same sense as children, servants, subjects, are rewarded and punished by those who govern them.

And thus the whole analogy of nature, the whole present course of things, most fully shows, that there is nothing incredible in the general doctrine of religion, that God will reward and punish men for their actions hereafter; nothing incredible, I mean, arising out of the notion of rewarding and punishing, for the whole course of nature is a present instance of his exercising that government over us, which implies in it rewarding and punishing.

But, as divine punishment is what men chiefly object against, and are most unwilling to allow, it may be proper to mention some circumstances in the natural course of punishments at present, which are analogous to what religion teaches us concerning a future state of punishment; indeed so analogous, that as they add a further credibility to it, so they cannot but raise a most serious apprehension of it in those who will attend to them.

It has been now observed, that such and such miseries naturally follow such and such actions of imprudence and wilfulness, as well as actions more commonly and more distinctly considered as vicious; and that these consequences, when they may be foreseen, are properly natural punishments annexed to such actions. For the general thing here insisted upon is, not that we see a great deal of misery in the world, but a great deal which men bring upon themselves by their own behaviour, which they might have foreseen and avoided. Now, the circumstances of these natural punishments, particularly deserving our attention, are such as these: That oftentimes they follow, or are inflicted in consequence of actions which procure many present advantages, and are accompanied with much present pleasure; for instance, sickness and untimely death is the consequence of intemperance, though accompanied with the highest mirth and jollity: That these punishments are often much greater than the advantages or pleasures obtained by the actions, of which they are the punishments or consequences: That though we may imagine a constitution of nature, in which these natural punishments, which are in fact to follow, would follow immediately upon such actions being done, or very soon after; we find, on the contrary, in our world, that they are often delayed a great while, sometimes even till long after the actions occasioning them are forgot; so that the constitution of nature is such, that delay of punishment is no sort nor degree of presumption of final impunity: That, after such delay, these natural punishments or miseries often come, not by degrees, but suddenly, with violence, and at once; however, the chief misery often does: That, as certainty of such distant misery following such actions is never afforded persons, so, perhaps, during the actions, they have seldom a distinct full expectation of its following:* and many times the case is only thus, that they see in general, or may see, the credibility that intemperance, suppose, will bring after its diseases; civil crimes, civil punishments; when yet the real probability often is, that they shall escape; but things notwithstanding take their destined course, and the misery inevitable follows at its appointed time, in very many of these cases. Thus, also, though youth may be alleged as an excuse for rashness and folly, as being naturally thoughtless, and not clearly foreseeing all the consequences of being untractable

* See Part I. chap. 6.

and profligate; this does not hinder but that these consequences follow, and are grievously felt throughout the whole course of future life. Habits contracted, even in that age, are often utter ruin; and men's success in the world, not only in the common sense of worldly success, but their real happiness and misery depends, in a great degree, and in various ways, upon the manner in which they pass their youth; which consequences they, for the most part, neglect to consider, and perhaps seldom can properly be said to believe beforehand. It requires also to be mentioned, that, in numberless cases, the natural course of things affords us opportunities for procuring advantages to ourselves at certain times, which we cannot procure when we will; nor even recall the opportunities, if we have neglected them. Indeed, the general course of nature is an example of this. If, during the opportunity of youth, persons are indocile and self-willed, they inevitably suffer in their future life, for want of those acquirements which they neglected the natural season of attaining. If the husbandman lets his seed-time pass without sowing, the whole year is lost to him beyond recovery. In like manner, though after men have been guilty of folly and extravagance, *up to a certain degree*, it is often in their power, for instance, to retrieve their affairs, to recover their health and character, at least in good measure, yet real reformation is, in many cases, of no avail at all towards preventing the miseries, poverty, sickness, infamy, naturally annexed to folly and extravagance, *exceeding that degree*. There is a certain bound to imprudence and misbehaviour, which being transgressed, there remains no place for repentance in the natural course of things. It is further, very much to be remarked, that neglects from inconsiderateness, want of attention,* not looking about us to see what we have to do, are often attended with consequences altogether as dreadful as any active misbehaviour, from the most extravagant passion. And, lastly, civil government being natural, the punishments of it are so too; and some of these punishments are capital, as the effects of a dissolute course of pleasure are often mortal. So that many natural punishments are final† to him who incurs them, if

* Part ii. chap. 6.

† The general consideration of a future state of punishment most evidently belongs to the subject of natural religion. But if any of these reflections should be thought to relate more particularly to this doctrine, as taught in scripture, the reader is desired to observe, that Gentile writers,

considered only in his temporal capacity; and seem inflicted by natural appointment, either to remove the offender out of the way of being further mischievous, or as an example, though frequently a disregarded one, to those who are left behind.

These things are not what we call accidental, or to be met with only now and then; but they are things of every day's experience; they proceed from general laws, very general ones, by which God governs the world, in the natural course of his providence. And they are so analogous to what religion teaches us concerning the future punishment of the wicked, so much of a piece with it, that both would naturally be expressed in the very same words and manner of description. In the book of Proverbs,* for instance, Wisdom is introduced as frequenting the most public places of resort, and as rejected when she offers herself as the natural appointed guide of human life. 'How long,' speaking to those who are passing through it, 'how long, ye simple ones, will ye love folly, and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.' But upon being neglected, 'Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when

both moralists and poets, speak of the future punishment of the wicked, both as to the duration and degree of it, in a like manner of expression and of description as the Scripture does. So that all which can positively be asserted to be matter of mere revelation, with regard to this doctrine, seems to be, that the great distinction between the righteous and the wicked shall be made at the end of this world; that each shall *then* receive according to his deserts. Reason did, as it well might, conclude, that it should, finally and upon the whole, be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked; but it could not be determined, upon any principles of reason, whether human creatures might not have been appointed to pass through other states of life and being, before that distributive justice should finally and effectually take place. Revelation teaches us, that the next state of things, after the present, is appointed for the execution of this justice; that it shall be no longer delayed; but *the mystery of God*, the great mystery of his suffering vice and confusion to prevail, *shall then be finished*; and he will *take to him his great power, and will reign*, by rendering to every one according to his works.

* Chap. 1.

distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.' This passage, every one sees, is poetical, and some parts of it are, highly figurative; but their meaning is obvious. And the thing intended is expressed more literally in the following words: 'For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the security of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.' And the whole passage is so equally applicable to what we experience in the present world, concerning the consequences of men's actions and to what religion teaches us is to be expected in another, that it may be questioned which of the two was principally intended.

Indeed, when one has been recollecting the proper proofs of a future state of rewards and punishments, nothing, methinks, can give one so sensible an apprehension of the latter, or representation of it to the mind, as observing, that after the many disregarded checks, admonitions, and warnings, which people meet with in the ways of vice, and folly, and extravagance; warnings from their very nature; from the examples of others; from the lesser inconveniences which they bring upon themselves; from the instructions of wise and virtuous men: after these have been long despised, scorned, ridiculed; after the chief bad consequences, temporal consequences, of their follies, have been delayed for a great while; at length they break in irresistibly, like an armed force; repentance is too late to relieve, and can serve only to aggravate their distress: the case is become desperate; and poverty and sickness, remorse and anguish, infamy and death, the effects of their own doings, overwhelm them, beyond possibility of remedy or escape. This is an account of what is in fact the general constitution of nature

It is not in any sort meant, that according to what appears at present of the natural course of things, men are always uniformly punished in proportion to their misbehaviour; but that there are very many instances of misbehaviour punished in the several ways now mentioned, and very dreadful instances too, sufficient to show what the laws of the universe may admit; and, if thoroughly considered, sufficient fully to answer all objections against the credibili

y of a future state of punishments, from any imaginations, hat the frailty of our nature and external temptations al- ıost annihilate the guilt of human vices; as well as objec- ons of another sort; from necessity; from suppositions ıat the will of an infinite Being cannot be contradicted; or ıat he must be incapable of offence and provocation.*

Reflections of this kind are not without their terrors to erious persons, the most free from enthusiasm, and of the reatest strength of mind; but it is fit things oe stated and onsidered as they really are. And there is, in the present ge, a certain fearlessness with regard to what may be ereafter under the government of God, which nothing but n universally acknowledged demonstration on the side of theism can justify, and which makes it quite necessary that ıen be reminded, and, if possible, made to feel, that there ; no sort of ground for being thus presumptuous, even pon the most sceptical principles. For, may it not be said f any person, upon his being born into the world, he may ehave so as to be of no service to it, but by being made an xample of the woful effects of vice and folly: That he ıay, as any one may, if he will, incur an infamous execu- ion from the hands of civil justice; or in some other course f extravagance shorten his days; or bring upon himself ıfamy and diseases worse than death? So that it had een better for him, even with regard to the present world, ıat he had never been born. And is there any pretence of eason for people to think themselves secure, and talk as if ney had certain proof, that, let them act as licentiously as hey will, there can be nothing analogous to this, with re- ;ard to a future and more general interest, under the provi- ence and government of the same God?

* See Chap 4 and 6.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Moral Government of God.

As the manifold appearances of design and of final causes, in the constitution of the world, prove it to be the work of an Intelligent Mind, so the particular final causes of pleasure and pain, distributed amongst his creatures, prove that they are under his government; what may be called his natural government of creatures endued with sense and reason. This, however, implies somewhat more than seems usually attended to, when we speak of God's natural government of the world. It implies government of the very same kind with that which a master exercises over his servants, or a civil magistrate over his subjects. These latter instances of final causes as really prove an intelligent *governor* of the world, in the sense now mentioned, and before* distinctly treated of, as any other instances of final causes prove an intelligent *Maker* of it.

But this alone does not appear, at first sight, to determine any thing certainly, concerning the moral character of the Author of nature, considered in this relation of governor; does not ascertain his government to be moral, or prove that he is the righteous Judge of the world. Moral government consists, not barely in rewarding and punishing men for their actions, which the most tyrannical person may do; but in rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked: in rendering to men according to their actions, considered as good or evil. And the perfection of moral government consists in doing this, with regard to all intelligent creatures, in an exact proportion to their personal merits or demerits.

Some men seem to think the only character of the Author of nature to be that of simple absolute benevolence. This, considered as a principle of action, and infinite in degree, is a disposition to produce the greatest possible happi

* Chap. 2.

ness, without regard to persons' behaviour, otherwise than as such regard would produce higher degrees of it. And supposing this to be the only character of God, veracity and justice in him would be nothing but benevolence conducted by wisdom. Now, surely this ought not to be asserted, unless it can be proved; for we should speak with cautious reverence upon such a subject. And whether it can be proved or no, is not the thing here to be inquired into; but whether, in the constitution and conduct of the world, a righteous government be not discernibly planned out; which necessarily implies a righteous governor. There may possibly be in the creation of beings, to whom the author of nature manifests himself under this most amiable of all characters, this of infinite absolute benevolence; for it is the most amiable, supposing it not, as perhaps it is not, incompatible with justice: but he manifests himself to us under the character of a righteous governor. He may, consistently with this, be simply and absolutely benevolent, in the sense now explained; but he has, for he has given us a proof in the constitution and conduct of the world that he is, a governor over servants, as he rewards and punishes us for our actions. And in the constitution and conduct of it, he may also have given, besides the reason of the thing, and the natural presages of conscience, clear and distinct intimations, that his government is righteous or moral: clear to such as think the nature of it deserving their attention; and yet not to every careless person who casts a transient reflection upon the subject.*

But it is particularly to be observed, that the divine government, which we experience ourselves under in the present state, taken alone, is allowed not to be the perfection of moral government. And yet this by no means hinders, but that there may be somewhat, be it more or less, truly moral in it. A righteous government may plainly appear to be carried on to some degree; enough to give us the apprehension that it shall be completed, or carried on to that degree

* The objections against religion, from the evidence of its not being universal, nor so strong as might possibly have been, may be urged, against natural religion, as well as against revealed. And, therefore, the consideration of them belongs to the first part of this Treatise, as well as the second. But as these objections are chiefly urged against revealed religion, I chose to consider them in the second part. And the answer to them there, Chap. 6, as urged against Christianity, being almost equally applicable to them as urged against the Religion of Nature, to avoid repetition, the reader is referred to that chapter.

of perfection which religion teaches us it shall; but v
cannot appear, till much more of the divine administ
be seen, than can in the present life. And the design c
chapter is to inquire how far this is the case; how far
and above the moral nature* which God has given us
our natural notion of him, as righteous governor of
his creatures to whom he has given this nature;† I say
far, besides this, the principles and beginnings of
government over the world may be discerned notwiths
ing and amidst all the confusion and disorder of it.

Now one might mention here, what has been often
with great force, that, in general, less uneasiness, and
satisfaction, are the natural consequences‡ of a virt
than a vicious course of life, in the present state a
instance of moral government established in nature
instance of it collected from experience and present
ter of fact. But it must be owned a thing of
culty to weigh and balance pleasures and uneasin
each among themselves, and also amongst each c
so as to make an estimate with an exactness, of
overplus of happiness on the side of virtue. And it i
impossible, that, amidst the infinite disorders of the w
there may be exceptions to the happiness of virtue,
with regard to those persons whose course of life, from
youth up, has been blameless; and more with rega
those, who have gone on for some time in the ways of
and have afterwards reformed. For suppose an instan
the latter case; a person with his passions inflamed, hi
tural faculty of self-government impaired by habits c
dulgence, and with all his vices about him, like so n
harpiers, craving for their accustomed gratification:
can say how long it might be before such a person w
find more satisfaction in the reasonableness and present
consequences of virtue, than difficulties and self-deni
the restraints of it? Experience also shows, that men
to a great degree, get over their sense of shame, so as
by professing themselves to be without principle, and a
ing even direct villany, they can support themselves ag
the infamy of it. But as the ill actions of any one will
bably be more talked of, and oftener thrown in his way,
his reformation; so the infamy of them will be much
felt, after the natural sense of virtue and of honor is

* Dissertation 2. † Chap. 6.
‡ See Lord Shaftesbury's Inquiry concerning Virtue. Part 2.

. Uneasinesses of this kind ought indeed to be put to ccount of former vices; yet it will be said, they are in the consequences of reformation. Still I am far from ing it doubtful, whether virtue, upon the whole, be hap- han vice in the present world; but if it were, yet the be- ngs of a righteous administration may, beyond all ques- be found in nature, if we will attentively inquire after . And,

In whatever manner the notion of God's moral govern- over the world might be treated, if it did not appear her he were, in a proper sense, our governor at all; yet it is certain matter of experience, that he does mani- imself to us under the character of a governor, in the explained,* it must deserve to be considered, whether be not reason to apprehend, that he may be a righteous oral governor. Since it appears to be fact, that does govern mankind by the method of rewards punishments, according to some settled rules of ribution, it is surely a question to be asked, What mption is there against his finally rewarding and hing them according to this particlar rule, namely, as ct reasonably or unreasonably, virtuously or viciously? rendering man happy or miserable by this rule, certain- ls in, much more falls in, with our natural apprehen- and sense of things, than doing so by any other rule, ever; since rewarding and punishing actions by any rule, would appear much harder to be accounted for by formed as he has formed ours. Be the evidence of reli- then, more or less clear, the expectation which it raises that the righteous shall upon the whole, be happy, and icked miserable, cannot, however, possibly be consi- as absurd or chimerical; because it is no more than an tation, that a method of government, already begun, be carried on, the method of rewarding and punishing s; and shall be carried on by a particular rule, which idably appears to us, at first sight, more natural than ther, the rule which we call distributive justice. Nor, Ought it to be entirely passed over, that tranquillity, ction, and external advantages, being the natural con- nces of prudent management of ourselves and our ; and rashness, profligate negligence, and wilful bringing after them many inconveniencies and suffer- these afford instances of a right constitution of na-

* Chap. 2

ture; as the correction of children, for their own sakes and by the way of example, when they run into danger or hurt themselves, is a part of right education. And thus, that God governs the world by general fixed laws; that he has endued us with capacities of reflecting upon this constitution of things, and forseeing the good and bad consequences of our behaviour, plainly implies some sort of moral government: since from such a constitution of things it cannot but follow, that prudence and imprudence, which are of the nature of virtue and vice,* must be, as they are, respectively rewarded and punished.

III. From the natural course of things, vicious actions are, to a great degree, actually punished as mischievous to society; and besides punishment actually inflicted upon this account, there is also the fear and apprehension of it in those persons whose crimes have rendered them obnoxious to it in case of a discovery; this state of fear being itself often a very considerable punishment. The natural fear and apprehension of it too, which restrains from such crimes, is a declaration of nature against them. It is necessary to the very being of society, that vices destructive of it should be punished *as being so;* the vices of falsehood, injustice, cruelty: which punishment, therefore, is as natural as society, and so is an instance of a kind of moral government, naturally established, and actually taking place. And, since the certain natural course of things is the conduct of Providence or the government of God, though carried on by the instrumentality of men, the observation here made amounts to this, that mankind find themselves placed by him in such circumstances, as that they are unavoidably accountable for their behaviour, and are often punished, and sometimes rewarded, under his government, in the view of their being mischievous or eminently beneficial to society.

If it be objected that good actions, and such as are beneficial to society, are often punished, as in the case of persecution, and in other cases, and that ill and mischievous actions are often rewarded; it may be answered distinctly, first, that this is in no sort necessary, and consequently not natural in the sense in which it is necessary, and therefore natural, that ill or mischievous actions should be punished. and, in the next place, that good actions are never punished considered as beneficial to society, nor ill actions rewarded

* See Dissertation 2.

under the view of their being hurtful to it. So that it stands good, without any thing on the side of vice to be set over against it, that the Author of nature has as truly directed that vicious actions, considered as mischievous to society, should be punished, and put mankind under a necessity of thus punishing them, as he has directed and necessitated us to preserve our lives by food.

IV. In the natural course of things, virtue, *as such*, is actually rewarded, and vice, *as such*, punished; which seems to afford an instance, or example, not only of government, but of moral government begun and established; moral in the strictest sense, though not in that perfection of degree which religion teaches us to expect. In order to see this more clearly, we must distinguish between actions themselves, and that quality ascribed to them, which we call virtuous or vicious. The gratification itself of every natural passion must be attended with delight; and acquisitions of fortune, however made, are acquisitions of the means or materials of enjoyment. An action, then, by which any natural passion is gratified, or fortune acquired, procures delight or advantage, abstracted from all consideration of the morality of such action. Consequently, the pleasure or advantage in this case is gained by the action itself, not by the morality, the virtuousness or viciousness of it, though it be, perhaps, virtuous or vicious. Thus, to say such an action, or course of behaviour, procured such pleasure or advantage, or brought on such inconvenience and pain, is quite a different thing from saying, that such good or bad effect was owing to the virtue or vice of such an action or behaviour. In one case an action, abstracted from all moral consideration, produced its effect; in the other case, for it will appear that there are such cases, the morality of the action, the action under a moral consideration, *i. e.* the virtuousness or viciousness of it, produced the effect. Now I say, virtue, as such, naturally procures considerable advantages to the virtuous, and vice, as such, naturally occasions great inconvenience, and even misery to the vicious, in very many instances. The immediate effects of virtue and vice upon the mind and temper are to be mentioned as instances of it. Vice, as such, is naturally attended with some sort of uneasiness, and not uncommonly with great disturbance and apprehension. That inward feeling which respecting lesser matters and in familiar speech, we call being vexed with one's self, and in matters of importance, and in more

serious language, remorse, is an uneasiness naturally arising from an action of man's own, reflected upon by himself as wrong, unreasonable, faulty, *i. e.* vicious in greater or less degrees; and this manifestly is a different feeling from that uneasiness which arises from a sense of mere loss or harm. What is more common than to hear a man lamenting an accident or event, and adding,—But, however, he has the satisfaction that he cannot blame himself for it; or, on the contrary, that he has the uneasiness of being sensible it was his own doing? Thus also, the disturbance and fear which often follow upon a man's having done an injury, arise from a sense of his being blame-worthy; otherwise there would, in many cases, be no ground of disturbance nor any reason to fear resentment or shame. On the other hand, inward security and peace, and a mind open to the several gratifications of life, are the natural attendants of innocence and virtue; to which must be added, the complacency, satisfaction, and even joy of heart, which accompany the exercise, the real exercise, of gratitude, friendship, benevolence.

And here, I think, ought to be mentioned, the fears of future punishment, and peaceful hopes of a better life, in those who fully believe or have any serious apprehension of religion; because these hopes and fears are present uneasiness and satisfaction to the mind, and cannot be got rid of by great part of the world, even by men who have thought most thoroughly upon that subject of religion. And no one can say how considerable this uneasiness and satisfaction may be, or what, upon the whole, it may amount to.

In the next place comes in the consideration, that as honest and good men are disposed to befriend honest good men, as such, and to discountenance the vicious, as such, and do so in some degree, indeed in a considerable degree, from which favor and discouragement cannot but arise considerable advantage and inconvenience. And though the generality of the world have little regard to the morality of their own actions, and may be supposed to have less for that of others, when they themselves are not concerned; yet let any one be known to be a man of virtue, somehow or other he will be favored, and good offices will be done him from regard to his character, without remote views, occasionally, and in some low degree, I think, by the generality of the world, as it happens to come in their way. Public *honors, too,* and advantages, are the natural consequence

:e sometimes at least the consequences in fact, of virtuous ;tions, of eminent justice, fidelity, charity, love to our coun- y, considered in the view of being virtuous. And some mes even death itself, often infamy and external inconven- nces, are the public consequences of vice, as vice. For istance, the sense which mankind have of tyranny, injus- ce, oppression, additional to the mere feeling or fear of mis- y, has doubtless been instrumental in bringing about ;volutions, which make a figure even in the history of the orld. For it is plain men resent injuries as implying faul- ness, and retaliate, not merely under the notion of having ;ceived harm, but of having received wrong; and they ave this resentment in behalf of others, as well as of them- ;lves. So, likewise, even the generality are, in some de- ree, grateful and disposed to return good offices, not mere- r because such a one has been the occasion of good to iem, but under the view that such good offices implied ind intention and good desert in the doer. To all this may e added two or three particular things, which many per- ons will think frivolous; but to me nothing appears so, vhich at all comes in towards determining a question of such nportance, as whether there be or be not a moral institu- ion of government, in the strictest sense moral, *visibly* es- ablished and begun in nature. The particular things are hese: That in domestic government, which is doubtless iatural, children, and others also, are very generally punish- d for falsehood, and injustice, and ill-behaviour, as such, and ewarded for the contrary; which are instances where vera- ity, and justice, and right behaviour, as such, are naturally nforced by rewards and punishments, whether more or less considerable in degree: that though civil government be supposed to take cognizance of actions in no other view than as prejudicial to society, without respect to the mo- rality of them, yet as such actions are immoral, so the sense which men have of the immorality of them very great- ly contributes, in different ways, to bring offenders to justice; and that entire absence of all crime and guilt, in the moral sense, when plainly appearing, will almost of course procure, and circumstances of aggravated guilt prevent, a remission of the penalties annexed to civil crimes, in many cases, though by no means in all.

Upon the whole, then, besides the good and bad effects of virtue and vice upon men's own minds, the course of the world does, in some measure, turn upon the approbation and

disapprobation of them, as such, in others. The sen well and ill doing, the presages of conscience, the lo good characters and dislike of bad ones, honor, sham sentment, gratitude; all these, considered in thems and in their effects, do afford manifest real instances o tue, as such, naturally favored, and of vice, as such countenanced, more or less, in the daily course of h life; in every age, in every relation, in every gener cumstance of it. That God has given us a moral nat may most justly be urged as a proof of our being und moral government; but that he has placed us in a cond which gives this nature, as one may speak, scope to op and in which it does unavoidably operate, *i. e.* influ mankind to act, so as thus to favor and reward virtue, discountenance and punish vice; this is not the same, l further additional proof of his moral government; for an instance of it. The first is a proof that he will fi favor and support virtue effectually; the second is ar ample of his favoring and supporting it at present, in degree.

If a more distinct inquiry be made, when it arises, virtue, as such, is often rewarded, and vice, as such is ished, and this rule never inverted; it will be found t ceed, in part, immediately from the moral nature itself v God has given us; and also, in part, from his having us, together with this nature, so great a power over other's happiness and misery. For, *first*, it is certain, peace and delight, in some degree and upon some occa is the necessary and present effect of virtuous practice effect arising immediately from that constitution of o ture. We are so made, that well-doing, as such, giv satisfaction, at least in some instances; ill-doing, as su none. And, *secondly*, from our moral nature, joined God's having put our happiness and misery, in many res in each other's power, it cannot but be that vice, as some kinds and instances of it at least, will be infamous men will be disposed to punish it as in itself detestable the villain will by no means be able always to avoid fe that infamy, any more than he will be able to escape further punishment which mankind will be disposed t flict upon him, under the notion of his deserving it. there can be nothing on the side of vice to answer

* See Dissertation 2.

cause there is nothing in the human mind contradictory, the logicians speak, to virtue. For virtue consists in a gard to what is right and reasonable, as being so; in a gard to veracity, justice, charity, in themselves: and there surely no such thing as a like natural regard to falsehood, injustice, cruelty. If it be thought, that there are inances of an approbation of vice, as such, in itself, and for s own sake, (though it does not appear to me that there is ny such thing at all; but, supposing there be,) it is evicntly monstrous; as much so as the most acknowledged erversion of any passion whatever. Such instances of erversion, then, being left out as merely imaginary, or, however, unnatural; it must follow, from the frame of our nature, nd from our condition, in the respects now described, that ice cannot at all be, and virtue cannot but be, favored, as uch, by others, upon some occasions; and happy in itself, n some degree. For what is here insisted upon, is not in he degree in which virtue and vice are thus distinguished, ut only the thing itself, that they are so in some degree; hough the whole good and bad effect of virtue and vice, as uch, is not inconsiderable in degree. But that they must e thus distinguished, in some degree, is in a manner necesary; it is matter of fact, of daily experience, even in the reatest confusion of human affairs.

It is not pretended but that, in the natural course of hings, happiness and misery appear to be distributed by ther rules, than only the personal merit and demerit of haracters. They may sometimes be distributed by way f mere discipline. There may be the wisest and best reasons why the world should be governed by general laws, rom whence such promiscuous distribution perhaps must ollow; and also why our happiness and misery should be ut in each other's power, in the degree which they are. And these things, as in general they contribute to the rewarding virtue and punishing vice, as such; so they often contribute also, not to the inversion of this, which is impossible, but to the rendering persons prosperous though wicked, afflicted though righteous; and, which is worse, to the *rewarding some actions*, though vicious, and *punishing other actions*, though virtuous. But all this cannot drown the voice of nature in the conduct of Providence plainly declaring itself for virtue, by way of distinction from vice, and preference to it. For, our being so constituted as that virtue and vice are thus naturally favored and discountenanced,

rewarded and punished respectively as such, is an intui proof of the intent of nature that it should be so; otherw the constitution of our mind, from which it thus immedia and directly proceeds, would be absurd. But it cannot said, because virtuous actions are sometimes punished, vicious actions rewarded, that nature intended it. T though this great disorder is brought about, as all acti are done, by means of some natural passion, yet *this ma* as it undoubtedly is, brought about by the perversion of s passion, implanted in us for other, and those very good poses. And indeed these other and good purposes, ever every passion, may be clearly seen.

We have then a declaration, in some degree of pres effect, from him who is supreme in nature, which side is of or what part he takes; a declaration for virtue, against vice. So far, therefore, as a man is true to virt to veracity and justice, to equity and charity, and the ri of the case, in whatever he is concerned, so far he is on side of the divine administration, and cooperates with it; from hence, to such a man, arises naturally a secret satis tion and sense of security, and implicit hope of somew further. And,

V. This hope is confirmed by the necessary tendencie virtue, which, though not of present effect, yet are at pre discernible in nature; and so afford an instance of so what moral in the essential constitution of it. There i the nature of things, a tendency in virtue and vice to duce the good and bad effects now mentioned, in a gre degree than they do in fact produce them. For insta good and bad men would be much more rewarded and p ished as such, were it not that justice is often artifici eluded, that characters are not known, and many would thus favor virtue and discourage vice, are hind from doing so by accidental causes. These tendencie virtue and vice are obvious with regard to *individuals*. it may require more particularly to be considered, that po in a *society*, by being under the direction of virtue, natur increases, and has a necessary tendency to prevail over posite power, not under the direction of it; in like mar as power, by being under the direction of reason, increa and has a tendency to prevail over brute force. There several brute creatures of equal, and several of supe strength, to that of men; and possibly the sum of the wh strength of brutes may be greater than that of mankin

it reason gives us the advantage and superiority over them, id thus man is the acknowledged governing animal upon e earth. Nor is this superiority considered by any as cidental; but as what reason has a tendency, in the na-re of the thing, to obtain. And yet, perhaps, difficulties ay be raised about the meaning, as well as the truth of e assertion, that virtue has the like tendency.

To obviate these difficulties, let us see more distinctly w the case stands with regard to reason, which is so idily acknowledged to have this advantageous tendency. ippose, then, two or three men, of the best and most im-oved understanding, in a desolate open plain, attacked by a times the number of beasts of prey; would their reason cure them the victory in this unequal combat? Power, en, though joined with reason, and under its direction, nnot be expected to prevail over opposite power, though erely brutal, unless the one bears some proportion to the her. Again, put the imaginary case, that rational and ational creatures were of like external shape and man-r; it is certain, before there were opportunities for the first distinguish each other, to separate from their adversaries, d to form a union among themselves, they might be upon level, or, in several respects, upon great disadvantage, ough, united, they might be vastly superior; since union of such efficacy, that ten men, united, might be able to complish what ten thousand of the same natural strength d understanding, wholly ununited, could not. In this se, then, brute force might more than maintain its ground ainst reason, for want of union among the rational crea-res. Or suppose a number of men to land upon an island abited only by wild beasts; a number of men, who, by e regulations of civil government, the inventions of art, d the experience of some years, could they be preserved long, would be really sufficient to subdue the wild beasts, d to preserve themselves in security from them; yet a ojecture of accidents might give such advantage to the ational animals as that they might at once overpower, d even extirpate, the whole species of rational ones. ngth of time, then, proper scope and opportunities for rea-n to exert itself, may be absolutely necessary to its pre-iling over brute force. Further still; there are many in-nces of brutes succeeding in attempts which they could have undertaken, had not their irrational nature render-them incapable of forseeing the danger of such attempts,

or the fury of passion hindered their attending to it; a
there are instances of reason, and real prudence preventi
men's undertaking what, it hath appeared afterwards, th
might have succeeded in by a lucky rashness. And in cert
conjunctures, ignorance and folly, weakness and disco
may have their advantages. So that rational animals ha
not necessarily the superiority over irrational ones; b
how improbable soever it may be, it is evidently possi
that, in some globes, the latter may be superior. And w
the former wholly at variance and disunited, by false self
terest and envy, by treachery and injustice, and consequ
rage and malice against each other, whilst the latter w
firmly united among themselves by instinct, this mig
greatly contribute to the introducing such an inverted or
of things. For every one would consider it as inverte
since reason has, in the nature of it, a tendency to prev
over brute force, notwithstanding the possibility it may
prevail, and the necessity which there is of many conc
ring circumstances to render it prevalent.

Now, I say, virtue in a society has a like tendency
procure superiority and additional power, whether this po
be considered as the means of security from opposite pow
or of obtaining other advantages. And it has this tend
cy, by rendering public good an object and end to ev
member of the society; by putting every one upon co
deration and diligence, recollection and self-governm
both in order to see what is the most effectual method,
also in order to perform their proper part, for obtaining
preserving it; by uniting a society within itself, and so
creasing its strength, and, which is particularly to be m
tioned, uniting it by means of veracity and justice. Fo
these last are principal bonds of union, so benevolenc
public spirit, undirected, unrestrained by them, is—nob
knows what.

And suppose the invisible world, and the invisible dis
sations of Providence, to be in any sort analogous to w
appears; or, that both together make up one uni
scheme, the two parts of which, the part which we see,
that which is beyond our observation, are analogous
each other; then, there must be a like natural tendency
the derived power, throughout the universe, under the di
tion of virtue, to prevail in general over that which is
under its direction; as there is in reason, derived reaso
the universe, to prevail over brute force. But then, in e

the prevalence of virtue, or that it may actually produce
at it has a tendency to produce, the like concurrences
e necessary as are to the prevalence of reason. There
ust be some proportion between the natural power or force
ich is, and that which is not, under the direction of vir-
e. There must be sufficient length of time; for the com-
ete success of virtue, as of reason, cannot from the nature
the thing, be otherwise than gradual: there must be, as
e may speak, a fair field of trial, a stage large and exten-
e enough, proper occasions and opportunities for the vir-
ous to join together, to exert themselves against lawless
ce, and to reap the fruit of their united labours. Now
leed it is to be hoped, that the disproportion between the
od and the bad, even here on earth, is not so great, but
at the former have natural power sufficient to their pre
iling to a considerable degree, if circumstances would
rmit this power to be united. For, much less, very much
ss power, under the direction of virtue, would prevail over
uch greater, not under the direction of it. However, good
en over the face of the earth cannot unite; as for other
asons, so because they cannot be sufficiently ascertained
each other's characters. And the known course of hu-
an things, the scene we are now passing through, parti-
ularly the shortness of life, denies to virtue its full scope
several other respects. The natural tendency which
e have been considering, though real, is *hindered* from be-
g carried into effect in the present state, but these hindran-
is may be removed in a future one. Virtue, to borrow the
hristian allusion, is militant here, and various untoward
cidents contribute to its being often overborne; but it may
mbat with greater advantage hereafter, and prevail com-
etely and enjoy its consequent rewards, in some future
ates. Neglected as it is, perhaps unknown, perhaps des-
ised and oppressed here, there may be scenes in eternity,
sting enough, and in every other way adapted, to afford it
sufficient sphere of action, and a sufficient sphere for the
atural consequences of it to follow in fact. If the soul be
aturally immortal, and this state to be a progress towards
future one, as childhood is towards mature age, good men
ay naturally unite, not only amongst themselves, but also
ith other orders of virtuous creatures, in that future state.
or virtue, from the very nature of it, is a principal and
ond of union, in some degree, amongst all who are endued
ith it, and known to each other; so as that by it a

good man cannot but recommend himself to the favor and protection of all virtuous beings, throughout the whole universe, who can be acquainted with his character, and can any way interpose in his behalf in any part of his duration. And one might add, that suppose all this advantageous tendency of virtue to become effect amongst one or more orders of creatures, in any distant scenes and periods, and to be seen by any orders of vicious creatures, throughout the universal kingdom of God, this happy effect of virtue would have a tendency, by way of example, and possibly in other ways, to amend those of them who are capable of amendment, and being recovered to a just sense of virtue. If our notions of the plan of Providence were enlarged, in any sort proportionable to what late discoveries have enlarged our views with respect to the material world, representations of this kind would not appear absurd or extravagant. However, they are not to be taken as intended for a literal delineation of what is in fact the particular scheme of the universe, which cannot be known without revelation; for suppositions are not to be looked on as true, because not incredible, but they are mentioned to show, that our finding virtue to be hindered from procuring to itself such superiority and advantages, is no objection against its having in the essential nature of the thing, a tendency to procure them. And the suppositions now mentioned do plainly show this; for they show, that these hindrances are so far from being necessary, that we ourselves can easily conceive how they may be removed in future states, and full scope be granted to virtue. And all these advantageous tendencies of it are to be considered as declarations of God in its favor. This, however, is taking a pretty large compass; though it is certain, that as the material world appears to be, in a manner, boundless and immense, there must be *some* scheme of Providence vast in proportion to it.

But let us return to the earth, our habitation, and we shall see this happy tendency of virtue, by imagining, for instance not so vast and remote; by supposing a kingdom or society of men, upon it, perfectly virtuous, for a succession of many ages; to which, if you please, may be given a situation advantageous to universal monarchy. In such a state there would be no such thing as faction, but men of the greatest capacity would, of course, all along, have the chief direction of affairs willingly yielded to them, and they would share it among themselves without envy. Each of

would have the part assigned him to which his gen-
as peculiarly adapted; and others, who had not any
guished genius, would be safe, and think themselves
happy, by being under the protection and guidance of
who had. Public determinations would really be the
of the united wisdom of the community, and they
l faithfully be executed by the united strength of it.
would in a higher way contribute, but all would in
way contribute to the public prosperity, and in it each
l enjoy the fruits of his own virtue. And as injustice,
ıer by fraud or force, would be unknown among them-
, so they would be sufficiently secured from it in their
bors. For cunning and false self-interest, confedera-
ı injustice, ever slight and accompanied with faction
ıtestine treachery; these, on one hand, would be found
childish folly and weakness, when set in opposition
st wisdom, public spirit, union inviolable, and fidelity
e other, allowing both a sufficient length of years to
ıeir force. Add the general influence which such a
lom would have over the face of the earth, by way of
ple particularly, and the reverence which would be
ıt. It would plainly be superior to all others, and the
l must gradually come under its empire; not by means
wless violence, but partly by what must be allowed to
st conquest, and partly by other kingdoms submitting
selves voluntarily to it throughout a course of ages,
laiming its protection, one after another, in successive
ncies. The head of it would be a universal monarch,
other sense than any mortal has yet been, and the eas-
style would be literally applicable to him, that *all peo-
ıations, and languages should serve him.* And though
d our knowledge of human nature, and the whole his-
of mankind, show the impossibility, without some mi-
ous interposition, that a number of men here on earth
unite in one society or government, in the fear of God
universal practice of virtue, and that such a govern-
should continue so united for a succession of ages;
admitting or supposing this, the effect would be as now
n out. And thus, for instance, the wonderful power
prosperity promised to the Jewish nation in the Scrip-
would be, in a great measure, the consequence of
t is predicated of them; that the 'people should be all
eous and inherit the land forever;'* were we to under-

* Isa. lx. 21.

stand the latter phrase of a long continuance only, sufficie to give things time to work. The predictions of this kin for there are many of them, cannot come to pass in th present known course of nature; but suppose them com to pass, and then the dominion and pre-eminence promise must naturally follow, to a very considerable degree.

Consider, now, the general system of religion; that th government of the world is uniform, and one, and moral that virtue and right shall finally have the advantage, an prevail over fraud and lawless force, over the deceits as wo as the violence of wickedness, under the conduct of one su preme Governor; and from the observations above made i will appear, that God has, by our reason, given us to see peculiar connexion in the several parts of this scheme, an a tendency towards the completion of it, arising out of the very nature of virtue; which tendency is to be considered as somewhat moral in the essential constitution of things. If any one should think all this to be of little importance, I desire him to consider what he would think, if vice had, es sentially and in its nature, these advantageous tendencies, or if virtue had essentially the direct contrary ones.

But it may be objected, that notwithstanding all these natural effects, and these natural tendencies of virtue, yet things may be now going on throughout the universe, and may go on hereafter, in the same mixed way as here at present upon earth; virtue sometimes prosperous, some times depressed; vice sometimes punished, sometimes suc cessful. The answer to which is, that it is not the purpose of this chapter, nor of this treatise, properly to prove God's perfect moral government over the world, or the truth of re ligion, but to observe what there is in the constitution and course of nature to confirm the proper proof of it, supposed to be known, and that the weight of the foregoing observa tions to this purpose may be thus distinctly proved. Pleas ure and pain are indeed, to a certain degree, say to a very high degree, distributed amongst us, without any apparent regard to the merit or demerit of characters. And were there nothing else, concerning this matter, discernible in the constitution and course of nature, there would be no ground, from the constitution and course of nature, to hope or to fear, that men would be rewarded or punished hereafter ac cording to their deserts; which, however, it is to be remark ed, implies, that even then there would be no ground, from appearances, to think that vice, upon the whole, would have

be advantage, rather than that virtue would. And thus he proof of a future state of retribution would rest upon the ual known arguments for it; which are, I think, plainly nanswerable, and would be so, though there were no addi onal confirma ion of them from the things above insisted n. But these things are a very strong confirmation of tem: For,

First, they show that the Author of nature is not indiffer nt to virtue and vice. They amount to a declaration from im, determinate, and not to be evaded, in favor of one, and gainst the other: such a declaration as there is nothing to e set over against, or answer, on the part of vice. So that rere a man, laying aside the proper proof of religion, to etermine from the course of nature only, whether it were nost probable that the righteous or the wicked would have he advantage in a future life, there can be no doubt but hat he would determine the probability to be, that the for ner would. The course of nature, then, in the view of it ow given, furnishes us with a real practical proof of the bligations of religion.

Secondly, When, conformably to what religion teaches us, God shall reward and punish virtue and vice, as such, so as hat every one shall, upon the whole, have his deserts, this istributive justice will not be a thing different in *kind*, but nly in *degree*, from what we experience in his present gov rnment. It will be that in *effect*, toward which we now see . *tendency*. It will be no more than the *completion* of that oral government, the *principles and beginning* of which ave been shown, beyond all dispute, discernible in the resent constitution and course of nature. And from hence t follows,

Thirdly, That as, under the natural government of God, ur experience of those kinds and degrees of happiness and isery, which we do experience at present, gives just ground o hope for and to fear higher degrees and other kinds of oth in a future state, supposing a future state admitted; so, nder his moral government, our experience that virtue and ice are, in the manners above-mentioned, actually reward ed and punished at present, in a certain degree, gives just ground to hope and to fear that they *may be* rewarded and punished in a higher degree hereafter. It is acknowledged, indeed, that this alone is not sufficient ground to think, that they *actually will be* rewarded and punished in a higher de ree, rather than in a lower: But then,

Lastly, There is sufficient ground to think so, from the good and bad tendencies of virtue and vice. For these tendencies are essential, and founded in the nature of things; whereas the hindrances, to their becoming effects are, in numberless cases, not necessary, but artificial only. Now it may be much more strongly urged, that these tendencies as well as the actual rewards and punishments of virtue and vice, which arise directly out of the nature of things, will remain hereafter, than that the accidental hinderances of them will. And if these hinderances do not remain, those rewards and punishments cannot but be carried on much further towards the perfection of moral government, *i. e.* the tendency of virtue and vice will become effect; but when or where, or in what particular way, cannot be known at all but by revelation.

Upon the whole, there is a kind of moral government implied in God's natural government; virtue and vice are naturally rewarded and punished as beneficial and mischievous to society, and rewarded and punished directly as virtue and vice. The notion, then, of a moral scheme of government, is not fictitious, but natural; for it is suggested to our thoughts by the constitution and course of nature and the execution of this scheme is actually begun, in the instances here mentioned. And these things are to be considered as a declaration of the Author of nature, for virtue and against vice; they give a credibility to the supposition of their being rewarded and punished hereafter, and also ground to hope and to fear, that they may be rewarded and punished in higher degrees than they are here. And as all this is confirmed, so the argument for religion, from the constitution and course of nature, is carried on farther, by observing, that there are natural tendencies, and, in innumerable cases, only artificial hindrances, to this moral scheme being carried on much farther towards perfection than it is at present. The notion, then, of a moral scheme of government, much more perfect than what is seen, is not a fictitious, but a natural notion, for it is suggested to our thought by the essential tendencies of virtue and vice. And these tendencies are to be considered as intimations, as implicit promises and threatenings, from the Author of nature, of much greater rewards and punishments to follow virtue and

vice, than do at present. And, indeed, every *natural* tendency, which is to continue, but which is hindered from becoming effect by only *accidental* causes, affords a presumption, that such tendency will, some time or other, become effect: a presumption in degree proportionable to the length of the duration through which such tendency will continue. And from these things together arises a real presumption, that the moral scheme of government established in nature, shall be carried on much farther towards perfection hereafter, and, I think, a presumption that it will be absolutely completed. But from these things, joined with the moral nature which God has given us, considered as given us by him, arises a practical proof* that it will be completed; a proof from fact, and therefore a distinct one from that which is deduced from the eternal and unalterable relations, the fitness and unfitness of actions.

* See this proof drawn out briefly, chap. 6.

CHAPTER IV.

Of a State of Probation, as implying Trial, Difficulties, Danger.

THE general doctrine of religion, that our present lif a state of probation for a future one, comprehends un it several particular things, distinct from each other.] the first and most common meaning of it seems to be, t our future interest is now depending, and depending u ourselves; that we have scope and opportunities here that good and bad behaviour, which God will reward punish hereafter; together with temptations to one, as v as inducements of reason to the other. And this is, in g measure, the same with saying, that we are under moral government of God, and to give an account of actions to him. For the notion of a future account, general righteous judgment, implies some sort of tem tions to what is wrong, otherwise there would be no m possibility of doing wrong, nor ground for judgment or crimination. But there is this difference, that the word *bation* is more distinctly and particularly expressive of all ments to wrong, or difficulties in adhering uniformly to w is right, and of the danger of miscarrying by such tem tions, than the words *moral government*. A state of pr tion, then, as thus particularly implying in it trial, difficul and danger, may require to be considered distinctly by it

And as the moral government of God, which relig teaches us, implies, that we are in a state of trial with reg to a future world; so also his natural government over implies, that we are in a state of trial, in a like sense, w regard to the present world. Natural government, by wards and punishments, as much implies natural trial moral government does moral trial. The natural gov

nt of God here meant,* consists in his annexing pleasure some actions, and pain to others, which are in our power do or forbear, and in giving us notice of such appointnt beforehand. This necessarily implies, that he has ade our happiness and misery, or our interest, to depend part upon ourselves. And so far as men have temptans to any course of action, which will probably occasion m greater temporal inconvenience and uneasiness than isfaction, so far their temporal interest is in danger from nselves, or they are in a state of trial with respect to it. w, people often blame others, and even themselves, for ir misconduct in their temporal concerns. And we find ny are greatly wanting to themselves, and miss of that tural happiness which they might have obtained in the sent life; perhaps every one does in some degree. But ny run themselves into great inconvenience, and into exme distress and misery, not through incapacity of knowr better, and doing better for themselves, which would be hing to the present purpose, but through their own fault. d these things necessarily imply temptation, and danger miscarrying, in a greater or less degree, with respect to r worldly interest or happiness. Every one, too, without ving religion in his thoughts, speaks of the hazards which ang people run upon their setting out in the world; hazls from other causes, than merely their ignorance, and avoidable accidents. And some courses of vice, at least, ing contrary to men's worldly interest or good, temptations these must at the same time be temptations to forego our sent and our future interest. Thus, in our natural or nporal capacity, we are in a state of trial, *i. e.* of difficulty d danger, analogous or like to our moral and religious al.

This will more distinctly appear to any one, who thinks worth while, more distinctly, to consider what it is which nstitutes our trial in both capacities, and to observe how nkind behave under it.

And that which constitutes this our trial, in both these pacities, must be somewhat either in our external circumnces, or in our nature. For, on the one hand, persons ay be betrayed into wrong behaviour upon surprise, or ercome upon any other very singular and extraordinary

* Chap. 2.

external occasions, who would, otherwise, have preserved their character of prudence and of virtue; in which cases, every one, in speaking of the wrong behaviour of these persons, would impute it to such particular external circumstances. And, on the other hand, men who have contracted habits of vice and folly of any kind, or have some particular passions in excess, will seek opportunities, and, as it were, go out of their way, to gratify themselves in these respects, at the expense of their wisdom and their virtue; led to it, as every one would say, not by external temptations, but by such habits and passions. And the account of this last case is, that particular passions are no more coincident with prudence, or that reasonable self-love, the end of which is our worldly interest, than they are with the principle of virtue and religion, but often draw contrary ways to one as well as to the other; and so such particular passions are as much temptations to act imprudently with regard to our worldly interest, as to act viciously.* However as when we say, men are misled by eternal circumstances of temptation, it cannot but be understood, that there is somewhat within themselves, to render those circumstances temptations, or to render them susceptible of impressions from them; so, when we say, they are misled by passions, it is always supposed, that there are occasions, circumstances, and objects, exciting these passions, and affording means for gratifying them. And, therefore, temptations from within, and from without, coincide, and mutually imply each other. Now, the several external objects of the appetites, passions, and affections, being present to the senses, or offering themselves to the mind, and so exciting emotions suitable to their nature, not only in cases where they can be gratified consistently with innocence and prudence, but also in cases where they cannot, and yet can be gratified imprudently and viciously; this as really puts them in danger of voluntarily foregoing their present interest or good, as their future, and as really renders self-denial necessary to secure one as the other; *i. e.* we are in a like state of trial with respect to both, by the very same passions, excited by the very same means. Thus, mankind having a temporal interest depending upon themselves, and a prudent course of behaviour being necessary to secure it, passions

* See Sermons preached at the Rolls, 1726, 2d Ed. 205, &c. Pref. p. 25, &c. Serm. p. 21, &c.

inordinately excited, whether by means of example or by any other external circumstance, towards such objects, at such times, or in such degrees, as that they cannot be gratified consistently with worldly prudence, are temptations dangerous, and too often successful temptations, to forego a greater temporal good for a less; *i. e.* to forego what is, upon the whole, our temporal interest, for the sake of a present gratification. This is a description of our state of trial in our temporal capacity. Substitute now the word *future* for *temporal*, and *virtue* for *prudence*, and it will be just as proper a description of our state of trial in our religious capacity, so analogous are they to each other.

If, from consideration of this our like state of trial in both capacities, we go on to observe farther, how mankind behave under it, we shall find there are some who have so little sense of it, that they scarce look beyond the passing day; they are so taken up with present gratifications, as to have, in a manner, no feeling of consequences, no regard to their future ease or fortune in this life, any more than to their happiness in another. Some appear to be blinded and deceived by inordinate passion, in their worldly concerns, as much as in religion. Others are, not deceived, but, as it were, forcibly carried away, by the like passions, against their better judgment, and feeble resolutions, too, of acting better. And there are men, and truly they are not a few, who shamelessly avow, not their interests, but their mere will and pleasure, to be their law of life; and who, in open defiance of every thing that is reasonable, will go on in a course of vicious extravagance, foreseeing, with no remorse and little fear, that it will be their temporal ruin; and some of them, under the apprehension of the consequences of wickedness in another state: and, to speak in the most moderate way, human creatures are not only continually liable to go wrong voluntarily, but we see likewise that they often actually do so, with respect to their temporal interests, as well as with respect to religion.

Thus, our difficulties and dangers, or our trials in our temporal and our religious capacity, as they proceed from the same causes, and have the same effect upon men's behaviour, are evidently analogous, and of the same kind.

It may be added, that as the difficulties and dangers of miscarrying in our religious state of trial are greatly increased, and, one is ready to think, in a manner wholly *made*, by the ill-behaviour of others: by a wrong education,

wrong in a moral sense, sometimes positively vicious; by general bad example; by the dishonest artifices which are got into business of all kinds; and, in very many parts of the world, by religion being corrupted into superstitions which indulge men in their vices; so, in like manner, the difficulties of conducting ourselves prudently in respect to our present interests, and our danger of being led aside from pursuing it, are greatly increased by a foolish education, and, after we come to mature age, by the extravagance and carelessness of others, whom we have intercourse with; and by mistaken notions, very generally prevalent, and taken up from common opinion, concerning temporal happiness, and wherein it consists. And persons, by their own negligence and folly in their temporal affairs, no less than by a course of vice, bring themselves into new difficulties, and, by habits of indulgence, become less qualified to go through them; and one irregularity after another embarrasses things to such a degree, that they know not whereabout they are, and often makes the path of conduct so intricate and perplexed, that it is difficult to trace it out; difficult even to determine what is the prudent or the moral part. Thus, for instance, wrong behaviour in one stage of life, youth; wrong, I mean, considering ourselves only in our temporal capacity, without taking in religion; this, in several ways, increases the difficulties of right behaviour in mature age; *i. e.* puts us into a more disadvantageous state of trial in our temporal capacity.

We are an inferior part of the creation of God. There are natural appearances of our being in a state of degradation;* and we certainly are in a condition which *does not seem*, by any means, the most advantageous we could imagine or desire, either in our natural or moral capacity, for securing either our present or future interest. However, this condition, low, and careful, and uncertain as it is, does not afford any just ground of complaint: For, as men may manage their temporal affairs with prudence, and so pass their days here on earth in tolerable ease and satisfaction, by a moderate degree of care; so, likewise, with regard to religion, there is no more required than what they are well able to do, and what they must be greatly wanting to themselves if they neglect. And for persons to have that put upon them which they are well able to go through, and no more,

* Part 2, Chap. 5.

we naturally consider as an equitable thing, supposing it done by proper authority. Nor have we any more reason to complain of it, with regard to the Author of nature, than of his not having given us other advantages, belonging to other orders of creatures.

But the thing here insisted upon is, that the state of trial which religion teaches us we are in, is rendered credible, by its being throughout uniform and of a piece with the general conduct of Providence towards us, in all other respects within the compass of our knowledge. Indeed, if mankind, considered in their natural capacity as inhabitants of this world only, found themselves, from their birth to their death in a settled state of security and happiness, without any solicitude or thought of their own; or, if they were in no danger of being brought into inconveniences and distress by carelessness, or the folly of passion, through bad example, the treachery of others, or the deceitful appearances of things; were this our natural condition, then it might seem strange, and be some presumption against the truth of religion, that it represents our future and more general interest, as not secure of course, but as depending upon our behaviour and requiring recollection and self-government to obtain it. For it might be alleged, 'What you say is our condition in one respect, is not in any wise of a sort with what we find, by experience, our condition is in another. Our whole present interest is secured to our hands, without any solicitude of ours, and why should not our future interest, if we have any such, be so too?' But since, on the contrary, thought and consideration, the voluntary denying ourselves many things which we desire, and a course of behaviour far from being always agreeable to us, are absolutely necessary to our acting even a common decent, and common prudent part, so as to pass with any satisfaction through the present world, and be received upon any tolerable good terms in it; since this is the case, all presumption against self-denial and attention being necessary to secure our highest interest, is removed. Had we not experience, it might, perhaps, speciously be urged, that it is improbable any thing of hazard and danger should be put upon us by an infinite Being, when every thing which is hazard and danger in our manner of conception, and will end in error, confusion, and misery, is now already certain in his foreknowledge. And, indeed, why any thing of hazard and danger should be put upon such frail creatures

as we are, may well be thought a difficulty in speculation; and cannot but be so, till we know the whole, or, however, much more of the case. But still the constitution of nature is as it is. Our happiness and misery are trusted to our conduct, and made to depend upon it. Somewhat, and, in many circumstances, a great deal too, is put upon us, either to do, or to suffer, as we choose. And all the various miseries of life, which people bring upon themselves by negligence and folly, and might have avoided by proper care, are instances of this; which miseries are, beforehand, just as contingent and undetermined as their conduct, and left to be determined by it.

These observations are an answer to the objections against the credibility of a state of trial, as implying temptations, and real danger of miscarrying with regard to our general interest, under the moral government of God; and they show, that, if we are at all to be considered in such a capacity, and as having such an interest, the general analogy of Providence must lead us to apprehend ourselves in danger of miscarrying, in different degrees, as to this interest, by our neglecting to act the proper part belonging to us in that capacity. For we have a present interest, under the government of God which we experience here upon earth. And this interest, as it is not forced upon us, so neither is it offered to our acceptance, but to our acquisition; in such sort, as that we are in danger of missing it, by means of temptations to neglect or act contrary to it; and without attention and self-denial, must and do miss of it. It is then perfectly credible, that this may be our case with respect to that chief and final good which religion proposes to us.

CHAPTER V.

Of a State of Probation, as intended for Moral Discipline and Improvement.

FROM the consideration of our being in a probation-state, of so much difficulty and hazard, naturally arises the question, how we came to be placed in it? But such a general inquiry as this would be found involved in insuperable difficulties. For, though some of these difficulties would be lessened by observing, that all wickedness, is voluntary, as is implied in its very notion, and that many of the miseries of life have apparent good effects, yet when we consider other circumstances belonging to both, and what must be the consequence of the former in a life to come, it cannot but be acknowledged plain folly and presumption, to pretend to give an account of the whole reasons of this matter; the whole reasons of our being alloted a condition, out of which so much wickedness and misery, so circumstanced, would in fact arise. Whether it be not beyond our faculties, not only to find out, but even to understand, the whole account of this; or, though we should be supposed capable of understanding it, yet, whether it would be of service or prejudice to us to be informed of it, is impossible to say. But as our present condition can in no wise be shown inconsistent with the perfect moral government of God; so religion teaches us we are placed in it, that we might qualify ourselves, by the practice of virtue, for another state, which is to follow it. And this, though but a partial answer, a very partial one indeed, to the inquiry now mentioned, yet is a more satisfactory answer to another, which is of real, and of the utmost importance to us to have answered—the inquiry, What is our business here? The known end, then, why we are placed in a state of so much affliction, hazard,

and difficulty, is, our improvement in virtue and piety, as the requisite qualification for a future state of security and happiness.

Now, the beginning of life, considered as an education for mature age in the present world, appears plainly, at first sight, analogous to this our trial for a future one; the former being, in our temporal capacity, what the latter is in our religious capacity. But some observations common to both of them, and a more distinct consideration of each, will more distinctly show the extent and force of the analogy between them; and the credibility, which arises from hence, as well as from the nature of the thing, that the present life was intended to be a state of discipline for a future one.

I. Every species of creature is, we see, designed for a particular way of life, to which the nature, the capacities, temper, and qualifications of each species, are as necessary as their external circumstances. Both come into the notion of such state, or particular way of life, and are constituent parts of it. Change a man's capacities or character to the degree in which it is conceivable they may be changed, and he would be altogether incapable of a human course of life and human happiness; as incapable, as if, his nature continuing unchanged, he were placed in a world where he had no sphere of action, nor any objects to answer his appetites, passions, and affections of any sort. One thing is set over against another, as an ancient writer expresses it. Our nature corresponds to our external condition. Without this correspondence, there would be no possibility of any such thing as human life and human happiness; which life and happiness are, therefore, a *result* from our nature and condition jointly; meaning by human life, not *living* in the literal sense, but the whole complex notion commonly understood by those words. So that, without determining what will be the employment and happiness, the particular life of good men hereafter, there must be some determinate capacities, some necessary character and qualifications, without which persons cannot but be utterly incapable of it; in like manner as there must be some, without which men would be incapable of their present state of life. Now,

II. The constitution of human creatures, and indeed of all creatures which come under our notice, is such, as that they are capable of naturally becoming qualified for states of life, for which they were once wholly unqualified. In imagination we may indeed conceive of creatures, as inca-

pable of having any of their faculties naturally enlarged, or as being unable naturally to acquire any new qualifications; but the faculties of every species known to us are made for enlargement, for acquirements of experience and habits. We find ourselves, in particular, endued with capacities, not only of perceiving ideas, and of knowledge or perceiving truth, but also of storing up our ideas and knowledge by memory. We are capable, not only of acting, and of having different momentary impressions made upon us, but of getting a new facility in any kind of action, and of settled alterations in our temper or character. The power of the two last is the power of habits. But neither the perception of ideas, nor knowledge of any sort, are habits, though absolutely necessary to the forming of them. However, apprehension, reason, memory, which are the capacities of acquiring knowledge, are greatly improved by exercise. Whether the word *habit* is applicable to all these improvements, and, in particular, how far the powers of memory and of habits may be powers of the same nature, I shall not inquire. But that perceptions come into our minds readily and of course, by means of their having been there before, seems a thing of the same sort, as readiness in any particular kind of action, proceeding from being accustomed to it. And aptness to recollect practical observations of service in our conduct, is plainly habit in many cases. There are habits of perception and habits of action. An instance of the former, is our constant and even involuntary readiness in correcting the impressions of our sight concerning magnitudes and distances, so as to substitute judgment in the room of sensation, imperceptibly to ourselves. And it seems as if all other associations of ideas, not naturally connected, might be called passive habits, as properly as our readiness in understanding languages upon sight, or hearing of words. And our readiness in speaking and writing them is an instance of the latter, of active habits. For distinctness, we may consider habits as belonging to the body, or the mind, and the latter will be explained by the former. Under the former are comprehended all bodily activities or motions, whether graceful or unbecoming, which are owing to use; under the latter, general habits of life and conduct, such as those of obedience and submission to authority, or to any particular person; those of veracity, justice, and charity; those of attention, industry, self-government, envy, revenge And habits of this latter kind seem produced by

repeated acts, as well as the former. And in like manner as habits belonging to the body are produced by externa acts, so habits of the mind are produced by the exertions of inward practical principles; *i. e.* by carrying them into act or acting upon them, the principles of obedience, of veracity, justice, and charity. Nor can those habits be formed by any external course of action, otherwise than as it proceeds from these principles; because it is only these inward principles exerted, which are strictly acts of obedience, of veracity of justice, and of charity. So, likewise, habits of attention, industry, self-government, are, in the same manner, acquired by exercise; and habits of envy and revenge by indulgence, whether in outward act or in thought and intention *i. e.* inward act; for such intention is an act. Resolutions to do well are properly acts: and endeavouring to enforce upon our own minds a practical sense of virtue, or to beget in others that practical sense of it which a man really has himself, is a virtuous act. All these, therefore, may and will contribute towards forming good habits. But, going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it, this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible, *i. e.* form a habit of insensibility to all moral considerations. For, from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions, by being repeated, grow weaker. Thoughts, by often passing through the mind, are felt less sensibly; being accustomed to danger, begets intrepidity, *i. e.* lessens fear; to distress, lessens the passion of pity; to instances of others' mortality, lessens the sensible apprehension of our own. And from these two observations together, that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us, it must follow, that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, whilst these motives and excitements, themselves are, by proportionable degrees, growing less sensible; *i. e.* are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen. And experience confirms this; for active principles, at the very time that they are less lively in perception than they were, are found to be some how wrought more thoroughly into the temper and character, and become more effectual in influencing our

practice. The three things just mentioned may afford instances of it. Perception of danger is a natural excitement of passive fear, and active caution; and, by being inured to danger, habits of the latter are gradually wrought, at the same time that the former gradually lessens. Perception of distress in others is a natural excitement, passively to pity, and actively to relieve it; but let a man set himself to attend to, inquire out, and relieve distressed persons, and he cannot but grow less and less sensibly affected with the various miseries of life, with which he must become acquainted; when yet, at the same time, benevolence, considered not as a passion, but as a practical principal of action, will strengthen; and, whilst he passively compassionates the distressed less, he will acquire a greater aptitude actively to assist and befriend them. So also at the same time that the daily instances of men's dying around us give us daily a less sensible passive feeling or apprehension of our own mortality, such instances greatly contribute to the strengthening a practical regard to it in serious men; *i. e.* to forming a habit of acting with a constant view to it. And this seems again further to show, that passive impressions made upon our minds by admonition, experience, example, though they may have a remote efficacy, and a very great one, towards forming active habits, yet can have this efficacy no otherwise than by inducing us to such a course of action; and that it is, not being affected so and so, but acting, which forms those habits; only it must be always remembered, that real endeavours to enforce good impressions upon ourselves, are a species of virtuous action. Nor do we know how far it is possible, in the nature of things, that effects should be wrought in us at once equivalent to habits, *i. e.* what is wrought by use and exercise. However, the thing insisted upon is, not what may be possible, but what is in fact the appointment of nature, which is, that active habits are to be formed by exercise. Their progress may be so gradual as to be imperceptible of its steps; it may be hard to explain the faculty by which we are capable of habits, throughout its several parts, and to trace it up to its original, so as to distinguish it from all others in our mind; and it seems as if contrary effects were to be ascribed to it. But the thing in general, that our nature is formed to yield, in some such manner as this, to use and exercise, is matter of certain experience.

Thus, by accustoming ourselves to any course of action

we get an aptness to go on, a facility, readiness, and often pleasure in it. The inclinations which rendered us averse to it grow weaker; the difficulties in it, not only the imaginary, but the real ones, lessen; the reasons for it offer themselves of course to our thoughts upon all occasions; and the least glimpse of them is sufficient to make us go on in a course of action to which we have been accustomed. And practical principles appear to grow stronger absolutely in themselves, by exercise, as well as relatively, with regard to contrary principles; which, by being accustomed to submit, do so habitually, and of course. And thus a new character, in several respects, may be formed; and many habitudes of life, not given by nature, but which nature directs us to acquire.

III. Indeed we may be assured, that we should never have had these capacities of improving by experience, acquired knowledge and habits, had they not been necessary, and intended to be made use of. And, accordingly, we find them so necessary, and so much intended, that without them we should be utterly incapable of that which was the end, for which we were made, considered in our temporal capacity only; the employments and satisfactions of our mature state of life.

Nature does in no wise qualify us wholly, much less at once, for this mature state of life. Even maturity of understanding and bodily strength are not only arrived to gradually, but are also very much owing to the continued exercise of our powers of body and mind from infancy. But if we suppose a person brought into the world with both these in maturity, as far as this is conceivable, he would plainly at first be as unqualified for the human life of mature age, as an idiot. He would be in a manner distracted with astonishment, and apprehension, and curiosity, and suspense; nor can one guess how long it would be before he would be familiarized to himself, and the objects about him, enough even to set himself to any thing. It may be questioned too, whether the natural information of his sight and hearing would be of any manner of use at all to him in acting, before experience. And it seems that men would be strangely headstrong and self-willed, and disposed to exert themselves with an impetuosity which would render society insupportable, and the living in it impracticable, were it not for some acquired moderation and self-government, some aptitude and readiness in restraining themselves, and con-

cealing their sense of things. Want of every thing of this kind which is learned, would render a man as incapable of society as want of language would; or as his natural ignorance of any of the particular employments of life, would render him incapable of providing himself with the common conveniences or supplying the necessary wants of it. In these respects, and probably in many more, of which we have no particular notion, mankind is left by nature an unformed, unfinished creature, utterly deficient and unqualified, before the acquirement of knowledge, experience, and habits, for that mature state of life, which was the end of his creation, considering him as related only to this world.

But then, as nature has endued us with a power of supplying those deficiencies, by acquired knowledge, experience, and habits; so, likewise, we are placed in a condition, in infancy, childhood, and youth, fitted for it; fitted for our acquiring those qualifications of all sorts, which we stand in need of in mature age. Hence children, from their very birth, are daily growing acquainted with the objects about them, with the scene in which they are placed, and to have a future part; and learning somewhat or other, necessary to the performance of it. The subordinations, to which they are accustomed in domestic life, teach them self-government in common behaviour abroad, and prepare them for subjection and obedience to civil authority. What passes before their eyes, and daily happens to them, gives them experience, caution against treachery and deceit, together with numberless little rules of action and conduct, which we could not live without, and which are learned so insensibly and so perfectly, as to be mistaken perhaps for instinct; though they are the effect of long experience and exercise: as much so as language, or knowledge in particular business, or the qualifications and behaviour belonging to the several ranks and professions. Thus, the beginning of our days is adapted to be, and is, a state of education in the theory and practice of mature life. We are much assisted in it by example, instruction, and the care of others; but a great deal is left to ourselves to do. And of this, as part is done easily and of course, so part requires diligence and care, the voluntary foregoing many things which we desire, and setting ourselves to what we should have no inclination to, but for the necessity or expedience of it. For that labor and industry which the station of so many absolutely requires, they would be greatly unqualified for in maturity, as those in other sta-

tions would be for any other sorts of application, if both not accustomed to them in their youth. And accordi persons behave themselves, in the general education all go through, and in the particular ones adapted to cular employments, their character is formed, and ma pear; they recommend themselves more or less; an capable of, and placed in, different stations in the soci mankind.

The former part of life, then, is to be considered as portant opportunity, which nature puts into our hand which, when lost, is not to be recovered. And our placed in a state of discipline throughout this life, for ar world, is a providential disposition of things, exactly same kind as our being placed in a state of discipline d childhood, for mature age. Our condition in both re is uniform and of a piece, and comprehended under on the same general law of nature.

And if we are not able at all to discern, how or in way the present life could be our preparation for an this would be no objection against the credibility of its so. For we do not discern how food and sleep cont to the growth of the body, nor could have any though they would, before we had experience. Nor do child all think, on the one hand, that the sports and exercis which they are so much addicted, contribute to their l and growth; nor, on the other, of the necessity which is for their being restrained in them; nor are they ca of understanding the use of many parts of discipline, nevertheless they must be made to go through, in or qualify them for the business of mature age. Were w able, then, to discover in what respect the present life form us for a future one, yet nothing would be mor posible than that it might, in some respects or other, fro general analogy of Providence. And this, for aught might reasonably be said, even though we should not in the consideration of God's moral government ov world. But,

IV. Take in this consideration, and consequently the character of virtue and piety is a necessary qualifi for the future state, and then we may distinctly see and in what respects, the present life may be a preparati it; since we *want, and are capable of improvement in tha acter, by moral and religious habits;* and *the present life to be a state of discipline for such improvement;* in like m

. we have already observed, how, and in what respects, fancy, childhood, and youth, are a necessary preparation, id a natural state of discipline, for mature age.

Nothing which we at present see would lead us to the ıought of a solitary inactive state hereafter, but, if we judge : all from the analogy of nature, we must suppose, accord-g to the Scripture account of it, that it will be a communi-. And there is no shadow of any thing unreasonable in ınceiving, though there be no analogy for it, that this com-ınity will be, as the Scripture represents it, under the ore immediate, or, if such an expression may be used, the ore sensible government of God. Nor is our ignorance, hat will be the employments of this happy community, ır our consequent ignorance, what particular scope or oc-ısion there will be for the exercise of veracity, justice, and ıarity, amongst the members of it with regard to each her, any proof that there will be no sphere of exercise for ıose virtues. Much less, if that were possible, is our igno-nce any proof that there will be no occasion for that frame mind, or character, which is formed by the daily practice those particular virtues here, and which is a result from

This at least must be owned in general, that as the go-ernment established in the universe is moral, the character virtue and piety must, in some way or other, be the con-tion of our happiness, or the qualification for it.

Now, from what is above observed concerning our natu-l power of habits, it is easy to see, that we are *capable* of oral improvement by discipline. And how greatly we *ant* it, need not be proved to any one who is acquainted ith the great wickedness of mankind, or even with those ıperfections which the best are conscious of. But it is not rhaps distinctly attended to by every one, that the occa-ons which human creatures have for discipline, to improve them this character of virtue and piety, is to be traced up gher than to excess in the passions, by indulgence and ıbits of vice. Mankind, and perhaps all finite creatures, ım the very constitution of their nature, before habits of rtue, are deficient, and in danger of deviating from what is ght, and therefore stand in need of virtuous habits for a se-ırity against this danger. For, together with the general incipal of moral understanding, we have in our inward ıme various affections towards particular external objects. hese affections are naturally, and of right, subject to the vernment of the moral principle, as to the occasions upon

which they may be gratified, as to the times, degrees, and manner, in which the objects of them may be pursued; but then the principle of virtue can neither excite them, nor prevent their being excited. On the contrary, they are naturally felt, when the objects of them are present to the mind, not only before all consideration whether they can be obtained by lawful means, but after it is found they cannot. For the natural objects of affection continue so; the necessaries, conveniences, and pleasures of life, remain naturally desirable, though they cannot be obtained innocently; nay, though they cannot possibly be obtained at all. And when the objects of any affection whatever cannot be obtained without unlawful means, but may be obtained by them, such affection, though its being excited, and its continuing some time in the mind, be as innocent as it is natural and necessary, yet cannot but be conceived to have a tendency to incline persons to venture upon such unlawful means, and therefore must be conceived as putting them in some danger of it. Now, what is the general security against this danger, against their actually deviating from right? as the danger is, so also must the security be, from within, from the practical principle of virtue.* And the strengthening or improving this principle, considered as practical, or as a principle of action, will lessen the danger or increase the security against it. And this moral principle is capable of improvement, by proper discipline and exercise; by recollecting the practical impressions which example and experience have made upon us; and, instead of following humor and mere inclination, by continually attending to the equity and right of the case, in whatever we are engaged, be it in

* It may be thought that a sense of interest would as effectually restrain creatures from doing wrong. But if by a *sense of interest* is meant, a speculative conviction or belief that such and such indulgence would occasion them greater uneasiness, upon the whole, than satisfaction, it is contrary to present experience to say, that this sense of interest is sufficient to restrain them from thus indulging themselves. And if by a *sense of interest* is meant, a practical regard to what is upon the whole our happiness, this is not only coincident with the principle of virtue or moral rectitude, but is a part of the idea itself. And it is evident this reasonable self-love wants to be improved, as really as any principle in our nature. For we daily see it overmatched, not only by the more boisterous passions, but by curiosity, shame, love of imitation, by any thing, even indolence: especially if the interest, the temporal interest, suppose, which is the end of such self-love, be at a distance. So greatly are profligate men mistaken, when they affirm they are wholly governed by interestedness and self-love And so little cause is there for moralists to disclaim this principle.

ater or less matters, and accustoming ourselves always ıct upon it, as being itself the just and natural motive of ion; and as this moral course of behaviour must neces- ily, under divine government, be our final interest. *Thus principle of virtue, improved into a habit, of which improve- it we are thus capable, will plainly be, in proportion to the ngth of it, a security against the danger which finite crea- e are in, from the very nature of propension, or particular ctions.* This way of putting the matter supposes parti- ar affections to remain in a future state, which it is scarce sible to avoid supposing. And if they do, we clearly , that acquired habits of virtue and self-government may necessary for the regulation of them. However, though were not distinctly to take in this supposition, but to ak only in general, the thing really comes to the same. habits of virtue, thus acquired by discipline, are improve- at in virtue; and improvement in virtue must be advance- at in happiness, if the government of the universe be moral. From these things we may observe, and it will further w this our natural and original need of being improved discipline, how it comes to pass, that creatures, made up- ıt, fall; and that those who preserve their uprightness, so doing, raise themselves to a more secure state of vir . To say that the former is accounted for by the nature liberty, is to say no more than that an event's actually pening is accounted for by a mere possibility of its hap- ing. But it seems distinctly conceivable from the very ure of particular affections or propensions. For, sup- e creatures intended for such a particular state of life, which such propensions were necessary; suppose them ued with such propensions, together with moral under- nding, as well including a practical sense of virtue as a culative perception of it; and that all these several prin- es, both natural and moral, forming an inward constitu- ı of mind, were in the most exact proportion possible, *i. e.* a proportion the most exactly adapted to their intended e of life; such creatures would be made upright, or finite- perfect. Now, particular propensions, from their very ure, must be felt, the objects of them being present, though y cannot be gratified at all, or not with the allowance of moral principle. But if they can be gratified without llowance, or by contradicting it, then they must be con- ed to have some tendency, in how low a degree soever, some tendency, to induce persons to such forbidden

gratification. This tendency, in some one particular propension, may be increased, by the greater frequency of occasions naturally exciting it, than of occasions exciting others. The least voluntary indulgence in forbidden circumstances, though but in thought, will increase this wrong tendency, and may increase it further, till, peculiar conjectures perhaps conspiring, it becomes effect; and danger of deviating from right, ends in actual deviation from it; a danger necessarily arising from the very nature of propension, and which, therefore, could not have been prevented, though it might have been escaped, or got innocently through. The case would be, as if we were to suppose a straight path marked out for a person, in which such a degree of attention would keep him steady; but if he would not attend in this degree, any one of a thousand objects catching his eye, might lead him out of it. Now, it is impossible to say, how much even the first full overt act of irregularity might disorder the inward constitution, unsettle the adjustments, and alter the proportions which formed it, and in which the uprightness of its make consisted. But repetition of irregularities would produce habits: and thus the constitution would be spoiled, and creatures, made upright, become corrupt and depraved in their settled character, proportionably to their repeated irregularities in occasional acts. But, on the contrary, these creatures might have improved and raised themselves to a higher and more secure state of virtue, by the contrary behaviour, by steadily following the moral principle, supposed to be one part of their nature, and thus notwithstanding that unavoidable danger of defection, which necessarily arose from propension, the other part of it. For, by thus preserving their integrity for some time, their danger would lessen, since propensions, by being inured to submit, would do it more easily and of course; and their security against this lessening danger would increase, since the moral principle would gain additional strength by exercise; both which things are implied in the notion of virtuous habits. Thus, then, vicious indulgence is not only criminal in itself, but also depraves the inward constitution and character. And virtuous self-government is not only right in itself, but also improves the inward constitution or character; and may improve it to such a degree, that though we should suppose it impossible for particular affections to be absolutely coincident with the moral principle, and consequently should allow that such creatures as have been above supposed would

ever remain defectible; yet their danger of actually doing from right may be almost infinitely lessened, and y fully fortified against what remains of it; if that may called danger, against which there is an adequate effect security. But still, this their higher perfection may tinue to consist in habits of virtue formed in a state of ipline, and this their more complete security remain to ceed from them. And thus it is plainly conceivable, that atures without blemish, as they came out of the hands God, may be in danger of going wrong, and so may stand need of the security of virtuous habits, additional to the al principle wrought into their natures by him. That ch is the ground of their danger, or their want of securi- may be considered as a deficiency in them, to which vir- us habits are the natural supply. And as they are nat- ly capable of being raised and improved by discipline, it r be a thing fit and requisite, that they should be placed ircumstances with an eye to it; in circumstances pecu- y fitted to be, to them, a state of discipline for their im- rement in virtue.

But how much more strong must this hold with respect to se who have corrupted their natures, are fallen from their inal rectitude, and whose passions are become excessive epeated violations of their inward constitution? Up- t creatures may want to be improved; depraved crea- s want to be renewed. Education and discipline, which r be in all degrees and sorts of gentleness and of severi- s expedient for those; but must be absolutely necessary hese. For these, discipline, of the severer sort too, and ne higher degrees of it, must be necessary, in order to r out vicious habits; to recover their primitive strength elf-government, which indulgence must have weakened; epair, as well as raise into a habit, the moral principle, in r to their arriving at a secure state of virtuous happiness. ow, whoever will consider the thing may clearly see, the present world is *peculiarly fit* to be a state of disci- e for this purpose, to such as will set themselves to mend improve. For, the various temptations with which we surrounded; our experience of the deceits of wicked- ; having been in many instances led wrong ourselves; great viciousness of the world; the infinite disorders equent upon it; our being made acquainted with pain sorrow, either from our own feeling of it, or from the t of it in others; these things, though some of them may

indeed produce wrong effects upon our minds, yet, when duly reflected upon, have all of them a direct tendency to bring us to a settled moderation and reasonableness of temper; the contrary both to thoughtless levity, and also to that unrestrained self-will, and violent bent to follow present inclination, which may be observed in undisciplined minds. Such experience, as the present state affords, of the frailty of our nature, of the boundless extravagance of ungoverned passion, of the power which an infinite Being has over us, by the various capacities of misery which he has given us; in short, that kind and degree of experience which the present state affords us, that the constitution of nature is such as to admit the possibility, the danger, and the actual event, of creatures losing their innocence and happiness, and becoming vicious, and wretched; hath a tendency to give a practical sense of things very different from a mere speculative knowledge, that we are liable to vice, and capable of misery. And who knows, whether the security of creatures in the highest and most settled state of perfection, may not, in part, arise from their having had such a sense of things as this, formed, and habitually fixed within them, in some state of probation? And passing through the present world with that moral attention which is necessary to the acting a right part in it, may leave everlasting impressions of this sort upon our minds. But to be a little more distinct: allurements to what is wrong; difficulties in the discharge of our duty; our not being able to act a uniform right part without some thought and care; and the opportunities which we have, or imagine we have, of avoiding what we dislike, or obtaining what we desire, by unlawful means, when we either cannot do it at all, or at least not so easily, by lawful ones; these things, *i. e.* the snares and temptations of vice, are what render the present world peculiarly fit to be a state of discipline to those who will preserve their integrity; because they render being upon our guard, resolution, and the denial of our passions, necessary in order to that end. And the exercise of such particular recollection, intention of mind, and self-government, in the practice of virtue, has, from the make of our nature, a peculiar tendency to form habits of virtue, as implying not only a real, but also a more continued, and a more intense exercise of the virtuous principle; or a more constant and a stronger effort of virtue exerted into act. Thus, suppose a person to know himself to be in particular danger, for some time, of doing any thing wrong, which yet

he fully resolves not to do, continued recollection, and keeping upon his guard, in order to make good his resolution, is a *continued* exerting of that act of virtue in a *high degree*, which need have been, and perhaps would have been, only *instantaneous* and *weak*, had the temptation been so. It is indeed ridiculous to assert, that self-denial is essential to virtue and piety; but it would have been nearer the truth, though not strictly the truth itself, to have said, that it is essential to discipline and improvement. For, though actions materially virtuous, which have no sort of difficulty, but are perfectly agreeable to our particular inclinations, may possibly be done only from these particular inclinations, and so may not be any exercise of the principle of virtue, *i. e.* not be virtuous actions at all; yet, on the contrary, they may be an exercise of that principle, and, when they are, they have a tendency to form and fix the habit of virtue. But when the exercise of the virtuous principle is more continued, oftener repeated, and more intense, as it must be in circumstances of danger, temptation, and difficulty, of any kind and in any degree, this tendency is increased proportionably, and a more confirmed habit is the consequence.

This undoubtedly holds to a certain length, but how far it may hold, I know not. Neither our intellectual powers, nor our bodily strength, can be improved beyond such a degree; and both may be over-wrought. Possibly there may be somewhat analogous to this, with respect to the moral character; which is scarce worth considering. And I mention it only, lest it should come into some persons thoughts, not as an exception to the foregoing observations, which perhaps it is, but as a confutation of them, which it is not. And there may be several other exceptions. Observations of this kind cannot be supposed to hold minutely, and in every case. It is enough that they hold in general. And these plainly hold so far, as that from them may be seen distinctly, which is all that is intended by them, that *the present world is peculiarly fit to be a state of discipline for our improvement in virtue and piety*; in the same sense as some sciences, by requiring and engaging the attention, not to be sure of such persons as will not, but of such as will, set themselves to them, are fit to form the mind to habits of attention.

Indeed, the present state is so far from proving, in event, a discipline of virtue to the generality of men, that, on the contrary, they seem to make it a discipline of vice. And

the viciousness of the world is, in different ways, the great temptation, which renders it a state of virtuous discipline, in the degree it is, to good men. The whole end, and the whole occasion of mankind being placed in such a state as the present, is not pretended to be accounted for. That which appears amidst the general corruption is, that there are some persons, who, having within them the principle of amendment and recovery, attend to and follow the notices of virtue and religion, be they more clear or more obscure, which are afforded them; and that the present world is, not only an exercise of virtue in these persons, but an exercise of it in ways and degrees peculiarly apt to improve it; apt to improve it, in some respects, even beyond what would be by the exercise of it required in a perfectly virtuous society, or in a society of equally imperfect virtue with themselves. But that the present world does not actually become a state of moral discipline to many, even to the generality, *i. e.* that they do not improve or grow better in it, cannot be urged as a proof that it was not intended for moral discipline, by any who at all observe the analogy of nature. For of the numerous seeds of vegetables and bodies of animals, which are adapted and put in the way, to improve to such a point or state of natural maturity and perfection, we do not see perhaps that one in a million actually does. Far the greatest part of them decay before they are improved to it, and appear to be absolutely destroyed. Yet no one, who does not deny all final causes, will deny, that those seeds and bodies which do attain to that point of maturity and perfection, answer the end for which they were really designed by nature; and therefore that nature designed them for such perfection. And I cannot forbear adding, though it is not to the present purpose, that the *appearance* of such an amazing *waste* in nature, with respect to these seeds and bodies, by foreign causes, is to us as unaccountable, as, what is much more terrible, the present and future ruin of so many moral agents by themselves, *i. e.* by vice.

Against this whole notion of moral discipline it may be objected, in another way, that so far as a course of behaviour, materially virtuous, proceeds from hope and fear, so far it is only a discipline and strengthening of self-love. But doing what God commands, because he commands it, is obedience, though it proceeds from hope or fear. And a course of such obedience will form habits of it; and a constant regard to veracity, justice, and charity, may form dis

tinct habits of these particular virtues, and will certainly form habits of self-government, and of denying our inclinations, whenever veracity, justice, or charity requires it. Nor is there any foundation for this great nicety, with which some affect to distinguish in this case, in order to depreciate all religion proceeding from hope or fear. For veracity, justice, and charity, regard to God's authority, and to our own chief interest, are not only all three coincident, but each of them is, in itself, a just and natural motive & principle of action. And he who begins a good life from any one of them, and perseveres in it, as he has already in some degree, so he cannot fail of becoming more and more of that character, which is correspondent to the constitution of nature as moral, and to the relation which God stands in to us as moral governor of it; nor, consequently, can he fail of obtaining that happiness, which this constitution and relation necessarily supposes connected with that character.

These several observations, concerning the active principle of virtue and obedience to God's commands, are applicable to passive submission or resignation to his will; which is another essential part of a right character, connected with the former, and very much in our power to form ourselves to. It may be imagined, that nothing but afflictions can give occasion for or require this virtue; that it can have no respect to, nor be any way necessary to qualify for a state of perfect happiness; but it is not experience which can make us think thus: Prosperity itself, whilst any thing supposed desirable is not ours, begets extravagant and unbounded thoughts. Imagination is altogether as much a source of discontent as any thing in our external condition. It is indeed true, that there can be no scope for patience, when sorrow shall be no more; but there may be need of a temper of mind, which shall have been formed by patience. For, though self-love, considered merely as an active principle leading us to pursue our chief interest, cannot but be uniformly coincident with the principle of obedience to God's commands, our interest being rightly understood; because this obedience, and the pursuit of our own chief interest, must be, in every case, one and the same thing; yet it may be questioned, whether self-love, considered merely as the desire of our own interest or happiness, can, from its nature, be thus absolute and uniformly coincident with the will of God, any more than particular affection can; coincident in

such sort, as not to be liable to be excited upon occasions, and in degrees, impossible to be gratified consistently with the constitution of things, or the divine appointments. So that *habits* of resignation may, upon this account, be requisite for all creatures; habits, I say, which signify what is formed by use. However, in general, it is obvious, that both self love and particular affections in human creatures, considered only as passive feelings, distort and rend the mind, and therefore stand in need of discipline. Now, denial of those particular affections, in a course of active virtue and obedience to God's will has a tendency to moderate them, and seems also to have a tendency to habituate the mind to be easy and satisfied with that degree of happiness which is alloted to us, *i. e.* to moderate self love. But the proper discipline for resignation is affliction. For a right behaviour under that trial, recollecting ourselves so as to consider it in the view in which religion teaches us to consider it, as from the hand of God; receiving it as what he appoints, or thinks proper to permit, in his world and under his government, this will habituate the mind to a dutiful submission; and such submission, together with the active principle of obedience, make up the temper and character in us which answers to his sovereignty, and which absolutely belongs to the condition of our being, as dependent creatures. Nor can it be said, that this is only breaking the mind to a submission to mere power, for mere power may be accidental, and precarious, and usurped; but it is forming within ourselves the temper of resignation to his rightful authority, who is, by nature, supreme over all.

Upon the whole, such a character, and such qualifications, are necessary for a mature state of life in the present world, as nature alone does in no wise bestow, but has put it upon us in great part to acquire, in our progress from one stage of life to another, from childhood to mature age; put it upon us to acquire them, by giving us capacities of doing it and by placing us, in the beginning of life, in a condition fit for it. And this is a general analogy to our condition in the present world, as in a state of moral discipline for another. It is in vain, then, to object against the credibility of the present life being intended for this purpose, that all the trouble and the danger unavoidably accompanying such discipline might have been saved us, by our being made at once the creatures and the characters *which we were to be*. For we experience, that *what we were to be*, was to be the

effect of *what we would do;* and that the general conduct of nature is, not to save us trouble or danger, but to make us capable of going through them, and to put it upon us to do so Acquirements of our own experience and habits, are the *natural* supply to our deficiencies, and security against our dangers; since it is as plainly natural to set ourselves to acquire the qualifications as the external things which we stand in need of. In particular, it is as plainly a general law of nature, that we should, with regard to our temporal interest, form and cultivate practical principles within us, by attention, use, and discipline, as any thing whatever is a natural law; chiefly in the begining of life, but also through out the whole course of it. And the alternative is left to our choice, either to improve ourselves and better our condition, or, in default of such improvement, to remain deficient and wretched. It is therefore perfectly credible, from the analogy of nature, that the same may be our case, with respect to the happiness of a future state and the qualifications necessary for it.

There is a third thing, which may seem implied in the present world being a state of probation, that it is a theatre of action for the manifestation of persons' characters, with respect to a future one; not, to be sure, to an all-knowing Being, but to his creation, or part of it. This may, perhaps, be only a consequence of our being in a state of probation in the other senses. However, it is not impossible that men's showing and making manifest what is in their heart, what their real character is, may have respect to a future life, in ways and manners which we are not acquainted with; particularly it may be a means, for the Author of nature does not appear to do any thing without means, of their being disposed of suitably to their characters, and of its being known to the creation, by way of example, that they are thus disposed of. But not to enter upon any conjectural account of this, one may just mention, that the manifestation of persons' characters contributes very much, in various ways, to the carrying on a great part of that general course of nature respecting mankind, which comes under our observation at present. I shall only add, that probation, in both these senses, as well as in that treated of in the foregoing chapter, is implied in moral government; since by persons' behaviour under it, their characters cannot but be manifested, and if they behave well, improved.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the opinion of Necessity, considered as influencing Practice.

THROUGHOUT the foregoing Treatise it appears, that the condition of mankind, considered as inhabitants of this world only, and under the government of God which we experience, is greatly analogous to our condition, as designed for another world, or under that farther government which religion teaches us. If, therefore, any assert, as a fatalist must, that the opinion of universal necessity is reconcilable with the former, there immediately arises a question in the way of analogy; whether he must not also own it to be reconcilable with the latter, *i. e.* with the system of religion itself, and the proof of it. The reader, then, will observe, that the question now before us, is not absolute, whether the opinion of fate be reconcilable with religion; but hypothetical, whether, upon supposition of its being reconcilable with the constitution of nature, it be not reconcilable with religion also? or, what pretence a fatalist,—not other persons, but a fatalist—has to conclude, from his opinion, that there can be no such thing as religion? And as the puzzle and obscurity, which must unavoidably arise from arguing upon so absurd a supposition as that of universal necessity, will, I fear, easily be seen, it will, I hope, as easily be excused.

But since it has been all along taken for granted, as a thing proved, that there is an intelligent Author of nature, or natural Governor of the world; and since an objection may be made against the proof of this, from the opinion of universal necessity, as it may be supposed that such necessity will itself account for the origin and preservation of all things, it is requisite that this objection be distinctly answered; or that it be shown, that a fatality, supposed consistent with what we certainly experience, does not destroy the proof of an intelligent Author and Governor of nature, be-

fore we proceed to consider, whether it destroys the proof of a moral Governor of it, or of our being in a state of religion.

Now when it is said by a fatalist, that the whole constitution of nature, and the actions of men, that every thing and every mode and circumstance of every thing, is necessary, and could not possibly have been otherwise, it is to be observed, that this necessity does not exclude deliberation, choice, preference, and acting from certain principles, and to certain ends; because all this is matter of undoubted experience, acknowledged by all, and what every man may, every moment, be conscious of. And from hence it follows, that necessity, alone and of itself, is in no sort an account of the constitution of nature, and how things came *to be* and *to continue* as they are; but only an account of this *circumstance* relating to their origin and continuance, that they could not have been otherwise than they are and have been. The assertion, that every thing is by necessity of nature, is not an answer to the question, Whether the world came into being as it is by an intelligent Agent forming it thus, or not; but to quite another question, Whether it came into being as it is, in that way and manner which we call *necessarily*, or in that way and manner which we call *freely*. For, suppose farther, that one, who was a fatalist, and one, who kept to his natural sense of things, and believed himself a free agent, were disputing together, and vindicating their respective opinions, and they should happen to instance in a house, they would agree that it was built by an architect. Their difference concerning necessity and freedom, would occasion no difference of judgment concerning this, but only concerning another matter, whether the architect built it necessarily or freely. Suppose, then, they should proceed to inquire, concerning the constitution of nature; in a lax way of speaking, one of them might say, it was by necessity, and the other by freedom; but, if they had any meaning to their words, as the latter must mean a free agent, so the former must at length be reduced to mean an agent, whether he would say one or more, acting by necessity; for abstract notions can do nothing. Indeed, we ascribe to God a necessary existence, uncaused by any agent. For we find within ourselves the idea of infinity, *i. e.* immensity and eternity, impossible, even in imagination, to be removed out of being. We seem to discern intuitively, that there must, and cannot but be, somewhat, external to ourselves, answering this idea.

or the archetype of it. And from hence (for *this abstrac* much as any other, implies a *concrete*) we conclude, that t is, and cannot but be, an infinite and immense eternal E existing prior to all design contributing to his existence. exclusive of it. And, from the scantiness of languag manner of speaking has been introduced, that necess the foundation, the reason, the account of the existen God. But it is not alledged, nor can it be at all inte that *every thing* exists as it does by this kind of nece a necessity antecedent in nature to design; it cannot, I be meant, that every thing exists as it does, by this kin necessity, upon several accounts; and particularly, bec it is admitted, that design in the actions of men, contri to many alterations in nature. For, if any deny this, I not pretend to reason with them.

From these things it follows, *first*, That when a fa asserts that every thing is *by necessity*, he must mean, *agent acting necessarily*; he must, I say, mean this; am very sensible he would not choose to mean it. *secondly*, That the necessity, by which such an agent is posed to act, does not exclude intelligence and design. that, were the system of fatality admitted, it would ju much account for the formation of the world, as for the s ture of a house, and no more. Necessity as much req and supposes a necessary agent, as freedom requires supposes a free agent to be the former of the world. the appearance of *design* and of *final causes* in the con tion of nature, as really prove this acting agent to be a *telligent designer*, or to act from choice, upon the sche necessity, supposed possible, as upon that of freedom.

It appearing thus, that the notion of necessity doe destroy the proof, that there is an intelligent Author of n and natural Governor of the world, the present question w the analogy before mentioned suggests, and which, I t it will answer, is this: whether the opinion of nece suppose consistent with possibility, with the constituti the world, and the natural government which we ex ence exercised over it, destroys all reasonable ground o lief, that we are in a state of religion; or whether that ion be reconcilable with religion, with the system and proof of it.

Suppose, then, a fatalist to educate any one, from

nuth up in his own principles; that the child should rea-
pon them, and conclude, that since he cannot possibly
e otherwise than he does, he is not a subject of blame
nmendation, nor can deserve to be rewarded or punish-
magine him to eradicate the very perceptions of blame
ommendation out of his mind, by means of this system;
m his temper, and character, and behaviour to it; and
it to judge of the treatment he was to expect, say, from
nable men, upon his coming abroad into the world, as
atalist judges from this system, what he is to ex[illegible]t
the Author of nature, and with regard to a future state:
not forbear stopping here to ask, whether any one of
ion sense would think fit, that a child should be put
these speculations, and be left to apply them to prac-
and a man has little pretence to reason, who is not
le that we are all children in speculations of this kind.
ever, the child would doubtless be highly delighted to
imself freed from the restraints of fear and shame, with
his play-fellows were fettered and embarrassed; and
y conceited in his superior knowledge, so far beyond
ars. But conceit and vanity would be the least bad
f the influence which these principles must have, when
easoned and acted upon, during the course of his edu-
. He must either be allowed to go on, and be the
e of all about him, and himself too, even to his own
ction, or else correction must be continually made use
supply the want of those natural perceptions of blame
ommendation, which we have supposed to be removed,
give him a practical impression of what he had rea-
himself out of the belief of, that he was, in fact, an
ntable child, and to be punished for doing what he was
. It is therefore in reality impossible, but that the cor-
n which he must meet with, in the course of his edu-
, must convince him, that if the scheme he was in-
ed in were not false, yet that he reasoned inconclusive-
n it, and, somehow or other, misapplied it to practice
ommon life; as what the fatalist experiences of the
ct of Providence at present, ought in all reason, to con-
him, that this scheme is misapplied, when applied to
bject of religion. But, supposing the child's tem-
uld remain still formed to the system, and his expecta-
the treatment he was to have in the world be regula-

ted by it, so as to expect that no reasonable man would blame or punish him for any thing which he should do, because he could not help doing it; upon this supposition, it is manifest he would, upon his coming abroad into the world, be insupportable to society, and the treatment which he would receive from it, would render it so to him; and he could not fail of doing somewhat very soon, for which he would be delivered over into the hands of civil justice: and thus, in the end, he would be convinced of the obligations he was under to his wise instructer. Or suppose this scheme of fatality, in any other way, applied to practice, such practical application of it will be found equally absurd, equally fallacious in a practical sense. For instance, that if a man be destined to live such a time, he shall live to it, though he take no care of his own preservation; or if he be destined to die before that time, no care can prevent it; therefore, all care about preserving one's life is to be neglected: which is the fallacy instanced in by the ancients. But now, on the contrary, none of these practical absurdities can be drawn, from reasoning upon the supposition, that we are free; but all such reasoning, with regard to the common affairs of life, is justified by experience. And, therefore, though it were admitted that this opinion of necessity were speculatively true, yet, with regard to practice, it is as if it were false, so far as our experience reaches; that is, to the whole of our present life. For, the constitution of the present world, and the condition in which we are actually placed, is as if we were free. And it may perhaps justly be concluded, that since the whole process of action, through every step of it, suspense, deliberation, inclining one way, determining, and at last doing as we determine, is as if were free, therefore we are so. But the thing here insisted upon is, that under the present natural government of the world, we find we are treated and dealt with as if we were free, prior to all consideration whether we are or not. Were this opinion therefore, of necessity, admitted to be ever so true, yet such is in fact our condition and the natural course of things, that, whenever we apply it to life and practice, this application of it always misleads us, and cannot but mislead us, in a most dreadful manner, with regard to our present interest. And how can people think themselves so very secure then, that the same application of the same opinion may not mislead them also in some analogous manner, with respect to a future, a more general, and more important interest? For, religion being

ractical subject, and the analogy of nature showing us, .t we have not faculties to apply this opinion, were it a e one, to practical subjects; whenever we do apply it to : subject of religion, and then conclude, that we are free m its obligations, it is plain this conclusion cannot be de- ıded upon. There will still remain just reason to think, ıatever appearances are, that we deceive ourselves; in newhat of a like manner as when people fancy they can .w contradictory conclusions from the idea of infinity.

From these things together, the attentive reader will see, ollows, that if, upon supposition of freedom, the evidence religion be conclusive, it remains so, upon supposition of :essity; because the notion of necessity is not applica- to practical subjects; *i. e.* with respect to them, is as if vere not true. Nor does this contain any reflection upon son, but only upon what is unreasonable. For, to pre- d to act upon reason, in opposition to practical principles ich the Author of our nature gave us to act upon, and to tend to apply our reason to subjects with regard to which own short views, and even our experience, will show us annot be depended upon,—and such, at best, the subject necessity must be,—this is vanity, conceit, and unrea- ıableness.

But this is not all. For we find within ourselves a will l are conscious of a character. Now, if this, in us, be ɔncilable with fate, it is reconcilable with it in the Author nature. And, besides, natural government and final ses imply a character and a will in the Governor and signer;* a will concerning the creatures whom he gov- s. The Author of nature, then, being certainly of some racter or other, notwithstanding necessity, it is evident : necessity is as reconcilable with the particular character ɔenevolence, veracity and justice, in him, which attri- es are the foundation of religion, as with any other char- er; since we find this necessity no more hinders *men* from ıg benevolent than cruel; true, than faithless; just, than ust, or, if the fatalist pleases, what we call unjust. For s said indeed, that what, upon supposition of freedom, uld be just punishment, upon supposition of necessity, omes manifestly unjust; because it is punishment inflic-

* By *will* and *character* is meant that, which, in speaking of men, we uld express, not only by these words, but also by the words *temper, le, dispositions, practical principles; that whole frame of mind, from nce we act in one manner rather than another.*

ted for doing that which persons could not avoid doing. I if the necessity, which is supposed to destroy the injusti of murder, for instance, would not also destroy the injusti of punishing it. However, as little to the purpose as th objection is in itself, it is very much to the purpose to obser from it, how the notions of justice and injustice remai even whilst we endeavour to suppose them removed; ho they force themselves upon the mind, even whilst we a making suppositions destructive of them: for there is n perhaps, a man in the world, but would be ready to mal this objection at first thought.

But though it is most evident, that universal necessity, it be reconcilable with any thing, is reconcilable with th character in the Author of nature, which is the foundati of religion; 'yet, does it not plainly destroy the proof, th he is of that character, and consequently the proof of re gion?' By no means. For we find, that happiness a misery are not our fate, in any such sense as not to be t consequences of our behaviour, but that they are the con quences of it.* We find God exercises the same kind government over us, with that which a father exercises ov his children, and a civil magistrate over his subjects. No whatever becomes of abstract questions concerning libe and necessity, it evidently appears to us, that veracity a justice must be the natural rule and measure of exercisi this authority, or government, to a Being, who can have competitions, or interfering of interests, with his creatu and his subjects.

But as the doctrine of liberty, though we experience truth, may be perplexed with difficulties which run up i the most abstruse of all speculations, and as the opinion necessity seems to be the very basis upon which infidel grounds itself, it may be of some use to offer a more pa cular proof of the obligations of religion, which may d tinctly be shown not to be destroyed by this opinion.

The proof, from final causes, of an intelligent Author nature, is not affected by the opinion of necessity; sup sing necessity a thing possible in itself, and reconcila with the constitution of things. And it is a matter of fa independent on this or any other speculation, that he g erns the world by the method of rewards and pun ments;‡ and also that he hath given us a moral faculty,

*Chap. 2.

‡Chap. 2.

which we distinguish between actions, and approve some as virtuous and of good desert, and disapprove others as vicious and of ill desert.* Now, this moral discernment implies, in the notion of it, a rule of action, and a rule of a very peculiar kind; for it carries in it authority and a right of direction; authority in such a sense, as that we cannot depart from it without being self-condemned.† And that the dictates of this moral faculty, which are by nature a rule to us, are moreover the laws of God, laws in a sense including sanctions may be thus proved. Consciousness of a rule or guide of action, in creatures who are capable of considering it as given them by their Maker, not only raises immediately a sense of duty, but also a sense of security in following it, and of danger in deviating from it. A direction of the Author of nature, given to creatures capable of looking upon it as such, is plainly a command from him; and a command from him necessarily includes in it, at least, an implicit promise in case of obedience, or threatening, in case of disobedience. But then the sense of perception of good and ill desert,‡ which is contained in the moral discernment, renders the sanction explicit, and makes it appear, as one may say, expressed. For, since his method of government is to reward and punish actions, his having annexed to some actions an inseperable sense of good desert, and to others of ill, this surely amounts to declaring upon whom his punishments shall be inflicted, and his rewards be bestowed. For he must have given us this discernment and sense of things as a presentiment of what is to be hereafter; that is by way of information beforehand, what we are finally to expect in his world. There is, then, most evident ground to think, that the government of God, upon the whole, will be found to correspond to the nature which he has given us; and that, in the upshot and issue of things, happiness and misery shall, in fact and event, be made to follow virtue and vice respectively; as he has already, in so peculiar a manner, associated the ideas of them in our minds. And from hence might easily be deduced the obligations of religious worship, were it only to be considered as a means of preserving upon our minds a sense of this moral government of God, and securing our obedience to it; which yet is an extremely imperfect view of that most important duty.

* Dissertation 2. † Sermon 2d at the Rolls.
‡ Dissertation 2.

Now, I say, no objection from necessity can lie against this general proof of religion: none against the proposition reasoned upon, that we have such a moral faculty and discernment; because this is a mere matter of fact, a thing of experience, that human kind is thus constituted: none against the conclusion; because it is immediate, and wholly from this fact. For the conclusion, that God will finally reward the righteous and punish the wicked, is not here drawn from its appearing to us fit that *he should*, but from its appearing, that he has told us *he will*. And this he hath certainly told us, in the promise and threatening, which, it hath been observed, the notion of a command implies, and the sense of good and ill desert, which he has given us, more distinctly expresses. And this reasoning from fact is confirmed, and, in some degree, even verified, by other facts; by the natural tendencies of virtue and of vice; and by this, that God, in the natural course of his providence, punishes vicious actions, as mischievous to society; and also vicious actions, as such, in the strictest sense. So that the general proof of religion is unanswerably real, even upon the wild supposition which we are arguing upon.

It must likewise be observed farther, that natural religion hath, besides this, an external evidence, which the doctrine of necessity, if it could be true, would not affect. For, suppose a person, by the observations and reasoning above, or by any other, convinced of the truth of religion; that there is a God, who made the world, who is the moral Governor and Judge of mankind, and will, upon the whole, deal with every one according to his works; I say, suppose a person convinced of this by reason, but to know nothing at all of

* However, I am far from intending to deny, that the will of God is determined by what is fit, by the right and reason of the case; though one chooses to decline matters of such abstract speculation, and to speak with caution when one does speak of them. But if it be intelligible to say, that *it is fit and reasonable for every one to consult his own happiness*, then *fitness of action, or the right and reason of the case*, is an intelligible manner of speaking. And it seems as inconceivable, to suppose God to approve one course of action, or one end, preferable to another, which yet his acting at all from design implies that he does, without supposing somewhat prior in that end, to be the ground of the preference; as to suppose him to discern an abstract proposition to be true, without supposing somewhat prior in it to be the ground of the discernment. It doth not, therefore, appear, that moral right is any more relative to perception than abstract truth is; or that it is any more improper to speak of the fitness and rightness of actions and ends, as founded in the nature of things, than to speak of abstract truth, as thus founded.

uity or the present state of mankind, it would be nat
for such an one to be inquisitive, what was the history
is system of doctrine; at what time, and in what man-
t came first into the world; and whether it were believ-
y any considerable part of it. And were he upon in-
r to find, that a particular person, in a late age, first of
roposed it as a deduction of reason, and that mankind
before wholly ignorant of it; then though its evidence
reason would remain, there would be no additional pro-
ity of its truth, from the account of its discovery. But
ıd of this being the fact of the case, on the contrary, he
d find what could not but afford him a very strong con-
tion of its truth: *First*, That somewhat of this system,
more or fewer additions and alterations, hath been pro-
l in all ages and countries of which we have any cer-
nformation relating to this matter. *Secondly*, That it
tain historical fact, so far as we can trace things up, that
whole system of belief, that there is one God, the Crea-
ıd moral Governor of the world, and that mankind is in
e of religion, was received in the first ages. And, *third-*
'hat as there is no hint or intimation in history, that this
m was first reasoned out; so there is express historical
ıditional evidence, as ancient as history, that it was
ıt first by revelation. Now, these things must be al-
l to be of great weight. The first of them, general
ent, shows this system to be conformable to the common
of mankind. The second, namely, that religion was
red in the first ages of the world, especially as it does
ppear that there were then any superstitious or false addi-
to it, cannot but be a farther confirmation of its truth. For
proof of this alternative; either that it came into the
l by relation, or that it is natural, obvious, and forces it-
ıpon the mind. The former of these is the conclusion
ırned men. And whoever will consider, how unapt for
ılation rude and uncultivated minds are, will, perhaps
hence alone, be strongly inclined to believe it the truth.
as it is shown in the second part * of this Treatise, that
is nothing of such peculiar presumption against a reve-
in the begining of the world, as there is supposed to
'ainst subsequent ones; a sceptic could not, I think,
any account, which would appear more probable even
nself, of the early pretences to revelation, than by sup-

* Chap. 2.

posing some real original one, from whence they were copied. And the third thing above mentioned, that there is express historical or traditional evidence, as ancient as history, of the system of religion being taught mankind by revelation; this must be admitted as some degree of real proof that it was so taught. For why should not the most ancient tradition be admitted as some additional proof of a fact, against which there is no presumption? And this proof is mentioned here, because it has its weight to show, that religion came into the world by revelation prior to all consideration of the proper authority of any book supposed to contain it; and even prior to all consideration, whether the revelation itself be uncorruptly handed down and related, or mixed and darkened with fables. Thus the historical account which we have, of the origin of religion, taking in all circumstances, is a real confirmation of its truth, no way affected by the opinion of necessity. And the *external* evidence, even of natural religion, is by no means inconsiderable.

But it is carefully to be observed, and ought to be recollected after all proofs of virtue and religion, which are only general, that as speculative reasons may be neglected, prejudiced, and deceived, so also may our moral understanding be impaired and perverted, and the dictates of it not impartially attended to. This, indeed, proves nothing against the reality of our speculative or practical faculties of perception; against their being intended by nature to inform us in the theory of things, and instruct us how we are to behave, and what we are to expect, in consequence of our behaviour.—Yet our liableness, in the degree we are liable, to prejudice and perversion, is a most serious admonition to us to be upon our guard, with respect to what is of such consequence, as our determinations concerning virtue and religion; and particularly, not to take custom, and fashion, and slight notions of honor, or imaginations of present ease, use, and convenience to mankind, for the only moral rule.*

The foregoing observations, drawn from the nature of the thing, and the history of religion, amount, when taken together, to a real practical proof of it, not to be confuted; such a proof as, considering the infinite importance of the thing, I apprehend, would be admitted fully sufficient, in reason, to influence the actions of men, who act upon

* Dissertation 2.

thought and reflection; if it were admitted that there is no proof of the contrary. But it may be said; 'There are many probabilities, which cannot indeed be confuted, *i. e.* shown to be no probabilities, and yet may be overballanced by greater probabilities on the other side; much more by demonstration. And there is no occasion to object against particular arguments alleged for an opinion, when the opinion itself may be clearly shown to be false, without meddling with such arguments at all, but leaving them just as they are. Now, the method of government by rewards and punishments, and especially rewarding and punishing good and ill desert, as such, respectively, must go upon supposition, that we are free, and not necessary agents. And it is incredible, that the Author of nature, should govern us upon a supposition as true, which he knows to be false; and therefore absurd to think, he will reward or punish us for our actions hereafter; especially that he will do it under the notion, that they are of good or ill desert.' Here, then, the matter is brought to a point. And the answer to all this is full, and not be evaded; that the whole constitution and course of things, the whole analogy of providence shows, beyond possibility of doubt, that the conclusion from this reasoning is false, wherever the fallacy lies. The doctrine of freedom, indeed, clearly shows where; in supposing ourselves necessary, when in truth we are free agents. But, upon the supposition of necessity, the fallacy lies in taking for granted that it is incredible necessary agents should be rewarded and punished. But that, somehow or other, the conclusion now mentioned is false, is most certain. For it is fact, that God does govern even brute creatures by the method of rewards and punishments, in the natural course of things. And men are rewarded and punished for their actions, punished for actions mischievous to society as being so, punished for vicious actions as such, by the natural instrumentality of each other, under the present conduct of Providence. Nay, even the affection of gratitude, and the passion of resentment, and the rewards and punishments following from them, which in general are to be considered as natural, *i. e.* from the Author of nature; these rewards and punishments, being naturally annexed to actions considered as implying good intention and good desert, ill intention and ill desert; these natural rewards and punishments,

I say, are as much a contradiction to the conclusion abov and show its falsehood, as a more exact and complete r warding and punishing of good and ill desert, as such. S that, if it be incredible that necessary agents should be th rewarded and punished, then men are not necessary, b free; since it is matter of fact that they are thus reward and punished. But if, on the contrary, which is the supp sition we have been arguing upon, it be insisted, that m are necessary agents, then there is nothing incredible in t farther supposition of necessary agents being thus rewar ed and punished; since we ourselves are thus dealt with.

From the whole, therefore, it must follow, that a neces ty supposed possible, and reconcilable with the constitutio of things, does in no sort prove, that the Author of natu will not, nor destroy the proof that he will, finally and up the whole, in his eternal government, render his creatur happy or miserable, by some means or other, as they beha well or ill. Or, to express this conclusion in words co formable to the title of the chapter, the analogy of natu shows us, that the opinion of necessity, considered as pr tical, is false. And if necessity, upon the supposition abo mentioned, doth not destroy the proof of natural religion evidently makes no alteration in the proof of revealed.

From these things, likewise, we may learn in what sen to understand that general assertion, that the opinion of cessity is essentially destructive of all religion. *First*, I practical sense; that by this notion atheistical men prete to satisfy and encourage themselves in vice, and justify others their disregard to all religion. And, *Secondly*, In strictest sense; that it is a contradiction to the whole con tution of nature, and to what we may every moment ex rience in ourselves, and so overturns every thing. But no means is this assertion to be understood, as if necessi supposing it could possibly be reconciled with the constitut of things, and with what we experience, were not also rec cilable with religion; for upon this supposition it demonst bly is so.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Government of God, considered as a Scheme, or Constitution, imperfectly comprehended.

THOUGH it be, as it cannot but be, acknowledged, that the analogy of nature gives a strong credibility to the general doctrine of religion, and to the several particular things contained in it, considered as so many matters of fact; and likewise, that it shows this credibility not to be destroyed by any notions of necessity; yet still, objections may be insisted upon against the wisdom, equity, and goodness of the divine government, implied in the notion of religion, and against the method by which this government is conducted, to which objections analogy can be no direct answer. For the credibility, or the certain truth, of a matter of fact, does not immediately prove any thing concerning the wisdom or goodness of it; and analogy can do no more, immediately or directly, than show such and such things to be true or credible, considered only as matters of fact. But, still, if, upon supposition of a moral constitution of nature and a moral government over it, analogy suggests and makes it credible, that this government must be a scheme, system, or constitution of government, as distinguished from a number of single unconnected acts of distributive justice and goodness; and likewise, that it must be a scheme, so imperfectly comprehended, and of such a sort in other respects, as to afford a direct general answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of it; then analogy is, remotely, of great service in answering those objections, both by suggesting the answer, and showing it to be a credible one.

Now, this, upon inquiry, will be found to be the case. For, *first* Upon supposition that God exercises a moral government over the world, the analogy of his natural government suggests, and makes it credible, that his moral govern-

ment must be a scheme quite beyond our comprehensi
and this affords a general answer to all objections against t
justice and goodness of it. And, *secondly*, A more disti
observation of some particular things contained in Go
scheme of natural government, the like things being supp
ed, by analogy, to be contained in his moral government,
farther show how little weight is to be laid upon these obj
tions.

1. Upon supposition that God exercises a moral gove
ment over the world, the analogy of his natural governme
suggests and makes it credible, that his moral governme
must be a scheme quite beyond our comprehension: a
this affords a general answer to all objections against the ju
tice and goodness of it. It is most obvious, analogy render
it highly credible, that upon supposition of a moral govern
ment, it must be a scheme,—for the world, and the whol
natural government of it, appears to be so—to be a schem
system, or constitution, whose parts correspond to each ot
er, and to a whole, as really as any work of art, or as an
particular model of a civil constitution, and government.
this great scheme of the natural world, individuals have v
rious peculiar relations to other individuals of their own sp
cies. And whole species are, we find, variously related
other species, upon this earth. Nor do we know how mu
farther these kind of relations may extend. And, as the
is not any action, or natural event, which we are acquaint
with, so single and unconnected as not to have a respect
some other actions and events, so, possibly, each of the
when it has not an immediate, may yet have a remote, n
ural relation to other actions and events, much beyond t
compass of this present world. There seems indeed, no
ing from whence we can so much as make a conjectu
whether all creatures, actions, and events throughout t
whole of nature, have relations to each other. But, as it
obvious that all events have future unknown consequenc
so, if we trace any, as far as we can go, into what is conn
ted with it, we shall find, that if such event were not c
nected with somewhat farther, in nature unknown to
somewhat both past and present, such event could not po
bly have been at all. Nor can we give the whole accou
of any one thing whatever; of all its causes, ends, and n
cessary adjuncts; those adjuncts, I mean, without which
could not have been. By this most astonishing connexio
these reciprocal correspondences and mutual relations, eve

ing which we see in the course of nature, is actually brought about. And things seemingly the most insignificant imaginable, are perpetually observed to be necessary conditions to other things of the greatest importance; so that any one thing whatever may, for aught we know to the contrary, be a necessary condition to any other. The natural world, then, and natural government of it, being such an incomprehensible scheme; so incomprehensible, that a man must really, in the literal sense, know nothing at all, who is not sensible of his ignorance in it: this immediately suggests, and strongly shows the credibility, that the moral world and government of it may be so too. Indeed, the natural and moral constitution and government of the world are so connected, as to make up together but one scheme; and it is highly probable, that the first is formed and carried on merely in subserviency to the latter, as the vegetable world is for the animal, and organized bodies for minds. But the thing intended here is, without inquiring how far the administration of the natural world is subordinate to that of the moral, only to observe the credibility, that one should be analagous or similar to the other: that, therefore, every act of divine justice and goodness may be supposed to look much beyond itself and its immediate object; may have some reference to other parts of God's moral administration, and to a general moral plan; and that every circumstance of this his moral government may be adjusted beforehand with a view to the whole of it. Thus, for example: the determined length of time, and the degrees and ways in which virtue is to remain in a state of warfare and discipline, and in which wickedness is permitted to have its progress; the times appointed for the execution of justice; the appointed instruments of it; the kinds of rewards and punishments, and the manners of their distribution; all particular instances of divine justice and goodness, and every circumstance of them, may have such respects to each other, as to make up altogether a whole, connected and related in all its parts; a scheme, or system, which is as properly one as the natural world is, and of the like kind. And supposing this to be the case, it is most evident that we are not competent judges of this scheme, from the small parts of it which come within our view in the present life; and therefore no objections against any of these parts can be insisted upon by reasonable men.

This our ignorance, and the consequence here drawn from it, are universally acknowledged upon other occasions; and,

though scarce denied, yet are universally forgot, v
persons come to argue against religion. And
not perhaps easy, even for the most reasonable me
ways to bear in mind the degree of our ignorance,
make due allowances for it. Upon these accoun
may not be useless to go on a little farther, in order to
more distinctly, how just an answer our ignorance is,
jections against the scheme of Providence. Suppose,
a person boldly to assert, that the things complained o
origin and continuance of evil, might easily have been
vented by repeated interpositions ; * interpositions so g
ed and circumstanced, as would prelude all mischief a
from them : or, if this were impracticable, that a *sche*
government is itself an imperfection ; since more good
have been produced without any scheme, system, or c
tution at all, by continued single unrelated acts of dis
tive justice and goodness, because these would have
sioned no irregularities : and farther than this, it is pre
ed, the objections will not be carried. Yet the answer
vious ; that, were these assertions true, still the observa
above, concerning our ignorance in the scheme of
government, and the consequence drawn from it, would
in great measure, enough to vindicate religion again
objections from the disorders of the present state.
these assertions true, yet the government of the world
be just and good notwithstanding ; for, at the most,
would infer nothing more than that it might have been
ter. But, indeed, they are, mere arbitrary assertions
man being sufficiently acquainted with the possibiliti
things, to bring any proof of them to the lowest degr
probability. For, however possible what is asserted
seem, yet many instances may be alledged, in things
less out of our reach, of suppositions absolutely impossibl
reducible to the most palpable self-contradictions, whic
every one by any means could perceive to be such, no
haps any one at first sight suspect. From these things
easy to see distinctly, how our ignorance, as it is the
mon, is really a satisfactory answer to all objections ag
the justice and goodness of Providence. If a man, con
plating any one providential dispensation, which had
lation to any others, should object, that he discerned in
disregard to justice, or a deficiency of goodness, not

would be less an answer to such objection, than our ignorance in other parts of Providence, or in the possibilities of things, no way related to what he was contemplating. But when we know not but the parts objected against may be relative to other parts unknown to us, and when we are unacquainted with what is, in the nature of the thing, practicable in the case before us, then our ignorance is a satisfactory answer; because some unknown relation, or some unknown impossibility, may render what is objected against just and good; nay, good in the highest practical degree.

II. And how little weight is to be laid upon such objections will farther appear, by a more distinct observation of some particular things contained in the natural government of God, the like to which may be supposed from analogy, to be contained in his moral government.

First, As, in the scheme of the natural world, no ends appear to be accomplished without means; so we find that means very undesirable often conduce to bring about ends in such a measure desirable, as greatly to over-balance the disagreeableness of the means. And in cases where such means are conducive to such ends, it is not reason, but experience, which shows us that they are thus conducive. Experience also shows many means to be conducive and necessary to accomplish ends, which means, before experience, we should have thought would have had even a contrary tendency. Now, from these observations relating to the natural scheme of the world, the moral being supposed analogous to it, arises a great credibility, that the putting our misery in each other's power to the degree it is, and making men liable to vice to the degree we are; and, in general, that those things which are objected against the moral scheme of Providence may be, upon the whole, friendly and assistant to virtue, and productive of an over-balance of happiness; *i. e.* the things objected against may be means by which an over-balance of good will, in the end, be found produced. And, from the same observations, it appears to be no presumption against this, that we do not, if indeed we do not, see those means to have any such tendency, or that they seem to us to have a contrary one. Thus, those things which we call irregularities, may not be so at all; because they may be means of accomplishing wise and good ends more considerable. And it may be added, as above, that they may also be the only means by which these wise and good ends are capable of being accomplished.

After these observations it may be proper to add, in ord to obviate an absurd and wicked conclusion from any them, that though the constitution of our nature, from wher we are capable of vice and misery, may, as it undoubte does, contribute to the perfection and happiness of the wor and though the actual permission of evil may be benefic to it, (*i. e.* it would have been more mischievous, not tha wicked person had himself abstained from his own wick ness, but that any one had forcibly prevented it, than tha was permitted;) yet, notwithstanding, it might have b much better for the world if this very evil had never b done. Nay, it is most clearly conceivable, that the v commission of wickedness may be beneficial to the wo and yet that it would be infinitely more beneficial for men refrain from it. For thus, in the wise and good constitut of the natural world, there are disorders which bring th own cures; diseases which are themselves remedies. Ma a man would have died, had it not been for the gout or fev yet it would be thought madness to assert, that sickness i better or more perfect state than health; though the li with regard to the moral world, has been asserted. But

Secondly, The natural government of the world is carr on by general laws. For this there may be wise and g reasons; the wisest and best, for aught we know to the c trary. And that there are such reasons, is suggested to thoughts by the analogy of nature; by our being made experience good ends to be accomplished, as indeed all good which we enjoy is accomplished, by this means, t the laws, by which the world is governed, are general. I we have scarce any kind of enjoyments, but what we a in some way or other, instrumental in procuring ourselv by acting in a manner which we foresee likely to proc them: now this foresight could not be at all, were not government of the world carried on by general laws. A though, for aught we know to the contrary, every sin case may be, at length, found to have been provided for e by these, yet to prevent all irregularities, or remedy them they arise, by the wisest and best general laws, may be possible in the nature of things, as we see it is absolut impossible in civil government. But then we are ready think, that the constitution of nature remaining as it is, a the course of things being permitted to go on, in other spects, as it does, there might be interpositions to prev irregularities, though they could not have been prevented

remedied by any general laws. And there would indeed be reason to wish—which, by the way, is very different from a right to claim—that all irregularities were prevented or remedied by present interpositions, if these interpositions would have no other effect than this. But it is plain they would have some visible and immediate bad effects; for instance, they would encourage idleness and negligence, and they would render doubtful the natural rule of life, which is ascertained by this very thing, that the course of the world is carried on by general laws. And farther, it is certain they would have distant effects, and very great ones too, by means of the wonderful connexions before mentioned. So that we cannot so much as guess, what would be the whole result of the interpositions desired. It may be said, any bad result might be prevented by farther interpositions, whenever there was occasion for them; but this again is talking quite at random, and in the dark. Upon the whole, then, we see wise reasons why the course of the world should be carried on by general laws, and good ends accomplished by this means, and, for aught we know, there may be the wisest reasons for it, and the best ends accomplished by it. We have no ground to believe, that all irregularities could be remedied as they arise, or could have been precluded by general laws. We find that interpositions would produce evil, and prevent good; and, for aught we know, they would produce greater evil than they would prevent, and prevent greater good than they would produce. And if this be the case, then, the not interposing is so far from being a ground of complaint, that it is an instance of goodness. This is intelligible and sufficient; and going farther seems beyond the utmost reach of our faculties.

But it may be said, that 'after all, these supposed impossibilities and relations are what we are unacquainted with; and we must judge of religion, as of other things, by what we do know, and look upon the rest as nothing: or, however, that the answers here given to what is objected against religion, may equally be made use of to invalidate the proofs of it, since their stress lies so very much upon our ignorance.' But,

First, Though total ignorance in any matter does indeed equally destroy, or rather preclude, all proof concerning it, and objections against it, yet partial ignorance does not

For we may in any degree be convinced, that a person is of such a character, and consequently will pursue such ends, though we are greatly ignorant what is the proper way of acting, in order the most effectually to obtain those ends; and in this case, objections against his manner of acting, as seemingly not conducive to obtain them, might be answered by our ignorance, though the proof that such ends were intended, might not at all be invalidated by it. Thus, the proof of religion is a proof of the moral character of God, and, consequently, that his government is moral, and that every one, upon the whole, shall receive according to his deserts; a proof that this is the designed end of his government. But we are not competent judges what is the proper way of acting, in order the most effectually to accomplish this end. Therefore our ignorance is an answer to objections against the conduct of Providence, in permitting irregularities, as seeming contradictory to this end. Now, since it is so obvious that our ignorance may be a satisfactory answer to objections against a thing, and yet not affect the proof of it; till it can be shown, it is frivolous to assert, that our ignorance invalidates the proof of religion, as it does the objections against it.

Secondly, Suppose unknown impossibilities, and unknown relations, might justly be urged to invalidate the proof of religion, as well as to answer objections against it, and that, in consequence of this, the proof of it were doubtful; yet still, let the assertion be despised, or let it be ridiculed, it is undeniably true, that moral obligations would remain certain, though it were not certain what would, upon the whole, be the consequences of observing or violating them. For these obligations arise immediately and necessarily from the judgment of our own mind, unless perverted, which we cannot violate without being self-condemned. And they would be certain, too, from considerations of interest. For, though it were doubtful what will be the future consequences of virtue and vice, yet it is however credible, that they may have those consequences which religion teaches us they will; and this credibility is a certain obligation in point of prudence, to abstain from all wickedness, and to live in the conscientious practice of all that is good. But,

Thirdly, The answers above given to the objections against religion, cannot equally be made use of to invalidate the

roof of it. For, upon supposition that God exercises a ıoral government over the world, analogy does most strong- r lead us to conclude, that this moral government must be scheme, or constitution, beyond our comprehension. And thousand particular analogies show us, that parts of such scheme, from their relation to other parts, may conduce to ccomplish ends, which we should have thought they had o tendency at all to accomplish; nay, ends, which, before xperience, we should have thought such parts were contra- ictory to, and had a tendency to prevent. And, therefore, ll these analogies show, that the way of arguing made use f in objecting against religion, is delusive; because they ıow it is not at all incredible, that, could we comprehend ıe whole, we should find the permission of the disorders ɔjected against, to be consistent with justice and goodness, ıd even to be instances of them. Now this is not applica- .e to the proof of religion, as it is to the objections against ; and therefore cannot invalidate that proof, as it does ıese objections.

Lastly, From the observations now made, it is easy to ːe, that the answers above given to the objections against rovidence, though, in a general way of speaking, they may ɜ said to be taken from our ignorance, yet are by no means .ken merely from that, but from somewhat which analogy ıows us concerning it. For analogy shows us positively, ıat our ignorance in the possibilities of things, and the vari- ıs relations in nature, renders us incompetent judges, and ads us to false conclusions, in cases similar to this, in which ɔ pretend to judge and to object. So that the things above sisted upon, are not mere suppositions of unknown impos- bilities and relations; but they are suggested to our oughts, and even forced upon the observations of serious en, and rendered credible, too, by the analogy of nature. nd, therefore, to take these things into the account, is to dge by experience, and what we do know; and it is not dging so, to take no notice of them.

CONCLUSION.

THE observations of the last chapter lead us to consider this little scene of human life, in which we are so busily engaged, as having reference, of some sort or other, to a much larger plan of things. Whether we are any way related to the more distant parts of the boundless universe into which we are brought, is altogether uncertain. But it is evident, that the course of things which comes within our view, is connected with somewhat past, present, and future beyond it. So that we are placed, as one may speak, in the middle of a scheme, not a fixed, but a progressive one, every way incomprehensible; incomprehensible, in a manner, equally with respect to what has been, what now is, and what shall be hereafter. And this scheme cannot but contain in it somewhat as wonderful, and as much beyond our thought and conception,† as any thing in that of religion. For, will any man in his senses say, that it is less difficult to conceive how the world came to be, and continued as it is, without, than with, an intelligent Author and Governor of it? admitting an intelligent Governor of it, that there is some other rule of government more natural, and of easier conception, than that which we call moral? Indeed, without an intelligent Author and Governor of nature, no account at all can be given, how this universe, or the part of it particularly in which we are concerned, came to be, and the course of it to be carried on, as it is; nor any of its general end and design, without a moral Governor of it. That there is an intelligent Author of nature and natural Governor of the world, is a principle gone upon in the foregoing treatise, as proved, and generally known and confessed to be proved. And the very notion of and intelligent Author of nature, proved by particular final

† See Part ii. chap. 2.

causes, implies a will and a character. Now, as our whole nature, the nature which he has given us, leads us to conclude his will and character to be moral, just, and good; so we can scarce in imagination conceive, what it can be otherwise. However, in consequence of this his will and character, whatever it be, he formed the universe as it is, and carries on the course of it as he does, rather than in any other manner; and has assigned to us, and to all living creatures, a part and a lot in it. Irrational creatures act this their part, and enjoy and undergo the pleasures and the pains allotted them, without any reflection. But one would think it impossible, that creatures endued with reason could avoid reflecting sometimes upon all this; reflecting, if not from whence we came, yet, at least, whither we are going, and what the mysterious scheme in the midst of which we find ourselves, will at length come out and produce; a scheme in which it is certain we are highly interested, and in which we may be interested even beyond conception. For many things prove it palpably absurd to conclude, that we shall cease to be at death. Particular analogies do most sensibly show us, that there is nothing to be thought strange in our being to exist in another state of life. And that we are now living beings, affords a strong probability that we shall *continue* so; unless there be some positive ground, and there is none from reason or analogy, to think death will destroy us. Were a persuasion of this kind ever so well grounded, there would, surely, be little reason to take pleasure in it. But, indeed, it can have no other ground than some such imagination, as that of our gross bodies being ourselves; which is contrary to experience. Experience, too, most clearly shows us the folly of concluding, from the body and the living agent affecting each other mutually, that the dissolution of the former is the destruction of the latter. And there are remarkable instances of their not affecting each other, which lead us to a contrary conclusion. The supposition, then, which in all reason we are to go upon, is, that our living nature will *continue* after death. And it is infinitely unreasonable to form an institution of life, or to act upon any other supposition. Now, all expectation of immortality, whether more or less certain, opens an unbounded prospect to our hopes and our fears; since we see the constitution of nature is such as to admit of misery, as well as to be productive of happi-

ness, and experience ourselves to partake of both in some degree; and since we cannot but know what higher degrees of both we are capable of. And there is no presumption against believing farther, that our future interest depends upon our present behaviour; for we see our present interest doth; and that the happiness and misery, which are naturally annexed to our actions, very frequently do not follow till long after the actions are done to which they are respectively annexed. So that, were speculation to leave us uncertain, whether it were likely that the Author of nature, in giving happiness and misery to his creatures, hath regard to their actions or not; yet, since we find by experience that he hath such regard, the whole sense of things which he has given us, plainly leads us, at once, and without any elaborate inquiries, to think that it may, indeed must, be to good actions chiefly that he hath annexed happiness, and to bad actions misery; or that he will, upon the whole, reward those who do well, and punish those who do evil. To confirm this from the constitution of the world, it has been observed, that some sort of moral government is necessarily implied in that natural government of God which we experience ourselves under; that good and bad actions, at present, are naturally rewarded and punished, not only as beneficial and mischievous to society, but also as virtuous and vicious; and that there is, in the very nature of the thing, a tendency to their being rewarded and punished in a much higher degree than they are at present. And though this higher degree of distributive justice, which nature thus points out and leads towards, is prevented for a time from taking place, it is by obstacles which the state of this world unhappily throws in its way, and which, therefore, are in their nature temporary. Now, as these things, in the natural conduct of Providence, are observable on the side of virtue, so there is nothing to be set against them on the side of vice. A moral scheme of government, then, is visibly established, and in some degree carried into execution; and this, together with the essential tendencies of virtue and vice duly considered, naturally raise in us an apprehension that it will be carried on farther towards perfection in a future state, and that every one shall there receive according to his deserts. And if this be so, then our future and general interest, under the moral government of God, is appointed to depend upon our behaviour, notwithstanding the difficulty which this may occasion of securing it, and the danger of lo-

sing it; just in the same manner as our temporal interest, under his natural government, is appointed to depend upon our behaviour, notwithstanding the like difficulty and danger. For, from our original constitution, and that of the world which we inhabit, we are naturally trusted with ourselves, with our own conduct and our own interest. And from the same constitution of nature, especially joined with that course of things which is owing to men, we have, temptations to be unfaithful in this trust, to forfeit this interest, to neglect it, and run ourselves into misery and ruin. From these temptations arise the difficulties of behaving so as to secure our temporal interest, and the hazard of behaving so as to miscarry in it. There is, therefore, nothing incredible in supposing, there may be the like difficulty and hazard with regard to that chief and final good which religion lays before us. Indeed, the whole account, how it came to pass that we were placed in such a condition as this, must be beyond our comprehension. But it is in part accounted for by what religion teaches us, that the character of virtue and piety must be a necessary qualification for a future state of security and happiness, under the moral government of God; in like manner, as some certain qualifications or other are necessary for every particular condition of life, under his natural government; and that the present state was intended to be a school of discipline, for improving in ourselves that character. Now, this intention of nature is rendered highly credible by observing, that we are plainly made for improvement of all kinds; that it is a general appointment of Providence, that we cultivate practical principles, and form within ourselves habits of action, in order to become fit for what we were wholly unfit for before; that, in particular, childhood and youth is naturally appointed to be a state of discipline for mature age; and that the present world is peculiarly fitted for a state of moral discipline. And, whereas objections are urged against the whole notion of moral government and a probation state, from the opinion of necessity, it has been shown, that God has given us the evidence, as it were, of experience, that all objections against religion on this head are vain and delusive. He has also, in his natural government, suggested an answer to all our short sighted objections against the equity and goodness of his moral government; and, in general, he has exemplified to us the latter by the former.

These things, which, it is to be remembered, are matters

of fact, ought, in all common sense, to awaken mankind, to induce them to consider, in earnest, their condition, and what they have to do. It is absurd,—absurd to the degree of being ridiculous, if the subject where not of so serious a kind, for men to think themselves secure in a vicious life, or even in that immoral thoughtlessness which far the greatest part of them are fallen into. And the credibility of religion, arising from experience and facts here considered, is fully sufficient, in reason, to engage them to live in the general practice of all virtue and piety; under the serious apprehension, though it should be mixed with some doubt,* of a righteous administration established in nature, and a future judgment in consequence of it; especially when we consider, how very questionable it is whether any thing at all can be gained by vice; how unquestionably little, as well as precarious, the pleasures and profits of it are at the best, and how soon they must be parted with at the longest. For, in the deliberations of reason, concerning what we are to pursue and what to avoid, as temptations to any thing from mere passion are supposed out of the case; so inducements to vice from cool expectations of pleasure and interest, so small, and uncertain, and short, are really so insignificant, as, in the view of reason, to be almost nothing in themselves, and, in comparison with the importance of religion, they quite disappear and are lost. Mere passion, indeed, may be alleged, though not as a reason, yet as an excuse for a vicious course of life. And how sorry an excuse it is will be manifest by observing, that we are placed in a condition in which we are unavoidably inured to govern our passions, by being necessitated to govern them; and to lay ourselves under the same kind of restraints, and as great ones too, from temporal regards, as virtue and piety, in the ordinary course of things, require. The plea of ungovernable passion, then, on the side of vice, is the poorest of all things; for it is no reason; and but a poor excuse. But the proper motives to religion, are the proper proofs of it, from our moral nature, from the presages of conscience, and our natural apprehension of God, under the character of a righteous Governor and Judge; a nature, and conscience, and apprehension given us by him; and from the confirmation of the dictates of reason, by *life and immortality brought to light by the gospel; and the wrath of God revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*

* Part ii. chap. 6.

THE ANALOGY OF RELIGION TO THE CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE.

PART II.

OF REVEALED RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

Of the Importance of Christianity.

Some persons, upon pretence of the sufficiency of the light of nature, avowedly reject all revelation, as, in its very notion, incredible, and what must be fictitious. And, indeed, it is certain no revelation would have been given, had the light of nature been sufficient in such a sense as to render one not wanting and useless. But no man, in seriousness and simplicity of mind, can possibly think it so, who considers the state of religion in the heathen world before revelation, and its present state in those places which have borrowed no light from it; particularly, the doubtfulness of some of the greatest men concerning things of the utmost importance, as well as the natural inattention and ignorance of mankind in general. It is impossible to say who would have been able to have reasoned out that whole system, which we call natural religion, in its genuine simplicity, clear of superstition; but there is certainly no ground to affirm that the generality could: if they could, there is no sort of probability that they would. Admitting there were, they would highly want a

standing admonition, to remind them of it, and inculcate it upon them. And, farther still, were they as much disposed to attend to religion as the better sort of men are, yet, even upon this supposition, there would be various occasions for supernatural instruction and asistance, and the greatest advantages might be afforded by them. So that to say, revelation is a thing superfluous, what there was no need of, and what can be of no service, is I think, to talk quite wildly and at random. Nor would it be more extravagant to affirm, that mankind is so entirely at ease in the present state, and life so completely happy, that it is a contradiction to suppose our condition capable of being in any respect better.

There are other persons, not to be ranked with these, who seem to be getting into a way of neglecting, and, as it were, overlooking revelation as of small importance, provided natural religion to be kept to. With little regard, either to the evidence of the former, or to the objections against it, and even upon supposition of its truth, 'the only design of it,' say they, 'must be to establish a belief of the moral system of nature, and to enforce the practice of natural piety and virtue. The belief and practice of these things were, perhaps, much promcted by the first publication of Christianity; but whether they are believed and practised, upon the evidence and motives of nature or of revelation, is no great matter.'* This way of considering revelation, though it is not the same with the former, yet borders nearly upon it and very much, at length, runs up into it, and requires to be particularly considered, with regard to the persons who seem to be getting into this way. The consideration of it will, likewise, farther show the extravagance of the former opinion, and the truth of the observations in answer to it, just mentioned. And an inquiry into the Importance of christianity, cannot be an improper introduction to a treatise concerning the credibility of it.

Now, if God has given a revelation to mankind, and commanded those things which are commanded in Christianity, it is evident, at first sight, that it cannot in any wise be an indifferent matter, whether we obey or disobey those com-

* Invenis multos——propterea nolle fieri Christianos, quia quasi sufficiunt sibi de bona vita sua. Bene vivere opus est, ait. Quid mihi præceptums est Christus? Ut bene vivam? Jam bene vivo. Quid mihi necessarius est Cnristus? Nullum homicidium, nullum furtum, nullam rapinam facio, res alienas non concupisco, nullo adulterio contaminor. Nam inveniatur in vita mea aliquid quod reprehendatur, et qui reprehenderit fiat Christianum.—*Aug. in Psalm* xxxi.

mands, unless we are certainly assured, that we know all the reasons for them, and that all those reasons are now ceased, with regard to mankind in general, or to ourselves in particular. And it is absolutely impossible we can be assured of this; for our ignorance of these reasons proves nothing in the case, since the whole analogy of nature shows, what is indeed in itself evident, that there may be infinite reasons for things, with which we are not acquainted.

But the importance of Christianity will more distinctly appear, by considering it more distinctly: *First*, As a republication, and external institution, of natural or essential religion, adapted to the present circumstances of mankind, and intended to promote natural piety and virtue; and *secondly*, As containing an account of a dispensation of things, not discoverable by reason, in consequence of which several distinct precepts are enjoined us. For, though natural religion is the foundation and principal part of Christianity, it is not in any sense the whole of it.

1. Christianity is a republication of natural religion. It instructs mankind in the moral system of the world; that it is the work of an infinitely perfect Being, and under his government; that virtue is his law; and that he will finally judge mankind in righteousness, and render to all according to their works, in a future state. And, which is very material, it teaches natural religion in its genuine simplicity, free from those superstitions with which it was totally corrupted, and under which it was in a manner lost.

Revelation is, farther, an authoritative publication of natural religion, and so affords the evidence of testimony for the truth of it. Indeed, the miracles and prophecies recorded in Scripture, were intended to prove a particular dispensation of Providence—the redemption of the world by the Messiah; but this does not hinder but that they may also prove God's general providence over the world, as our Moral Governor and Judge. And they evidently do prove it; because this character of the Author of nature is necessarily connected with and implied in that particular revealed dispensation of things; it is likewise continually taught expressly, and insisted upon, by those persons who wrought the miracles and delivered the prophecies. So that, indeed, natural religion seems as much proved by the Scripture revelation, as it would have been, had the design of revelation been nothing else than to prove it.

But it may possibly be disputed, how far miracles can

prove natural religion; and notable objections may be urged against this proof of it, considered as a matter of speculation; but, considered as a practical thing, there can be none. For, suppose a person to teach natural religion to a nation who had lived in total ignorance or forgetfulness of it, and to declare he was commissioned by God so to do; suppose him, in proof of his commission, to foretell things future, which no human foresight could have guessed at; to divide the sea with a word; feed great multitudes with bread from heaven; cure all manner of diseases; and raise the dead, even himself, to life;—would not this give additional credibility to his teaching, a credibility beyond what that of a common man would have, and be an authoritative publication of the law of nature, *i. e.* a new proof of it? It would be a practical one, of the strongest kind, perhaps, which human creatures are capable of having given them. The law of Moses, then, and the gospel of Christ, are authoritative publications of the religion of nature: they afford a proof of God's general providence, as moral Governor of the world, as well as of his particular dispensations of Providence towards sinful creatures, revealed in the law of the gospel. As they are the only evidence of the latter, so they are an additional evidence of the former.

To show this further, let us suppose a man of the greatest and most improved capacity, who had never heard of revelation, convinced upon the whole, notwithstanding the disorders of the world, that it was under the direction and moral government of an infinitely perfect Being, but ready to question, whether he were not got beyond the reach of his faculties; suppose him brought, by this suspicion, into great danger of being carried away by the universal bad example of almost every one around him, who appeared to have no sense, no practical sense at least, of these things; and this perhaps, would be as advantageous a situation, with regard to religion, as nature alone ever placed any man in. What a confirmation now must it be to such a person, all at once to find, that this moral system of things was revealed to mankind, in the name of that infinite Being whom he had, from principles of reason, believed in; and that the publishers of the revelation proved their commission from him, by making it appear that he had intrusted them with a power of suspending and changing the general laws of nature!

Nor must it, by any means, be omitted; for it is a thing of the utmost importance, that life and immortality are em

inently brought to light by the gospel. The great doctrines of a future state, the danger of a course of wickedness, and the efficacy of repentance, are not only confirmed in the gospel, but are taught, especially the last is, with a degree of light; to which that of nature is but darkness.

Farther: As christianity served these ends and purposes, when it was first published, by the miraculous publication itself, so it was intended to serve the same purposes, in future ages, by means of the settlement of a visible church; of a society, distinguished from common ones, and from the rest of the world, by peculiar religious institutions; by an instituted method of instruction, and an instituted form of external religion. Miraculous powers were given to the first preachers o. Christianity, in order to their introducing it into the world: a visible church was established, in order to continue it, and carry it on successively throughout all ages. Had Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, only taught, and by miracles proved, religion to their contemporaries the benefits of their instructions would have reached but to a small part of mankind. Christianity must have been, in a great degree, sunk and forgot in a very few ages. To prevent this appears to have been one reason why a visible church was instituted; to be, like a city upon a hill, a standing memorial to the world of the duty which we owe our Maker; to call men continually, both by example and instruction, to attend to it, and, by the form of religion ever before their eyes, remind them of the reality; to be the repository of the oracles of God; to hold up the light of revelation in aid to that of nature, and propagate it throughout all generations to the end of the world—the light of revelation, considered here in no other view, than as designed to enforce natural religion. And, in proportion as Christianity is professed and taught in the world, religion, natural or essential religion, is thus distinctly and advantageously laid before mankind, and brought again and again to their thoughts, as a matter of infinite importance. A visible church has also a farther tendency to promote natural religion, as being an instituted method of education, originally intended to be of more peculiar advantage to those who would conform to it. For one end of the institution was, that, by admonition and reproof, as well as instruction; by a general regular discipline, and public exercises of religion, *the body of Christ*, as the Scripture speaks, should be *edified*; *i. e.* trained up in piety and virtue, for a higher and a better state. This settlement then,

appearing thus beneficial; tending, in the nature c thing, to answer, and in some degree actually answ those ends; it is to be remembered, that the very noti it implies positive institutions; for the visibility of the c consists in them. Take away every thing of this kin you lose the very notion itself. So that, if the things mentioned are advantages, the reason and importai positive institutions in general is most obvious; since out them, these advantages could not be secured to the And it is mere idle wantonness, to insist upon knowin reasons why such particular ones were fixed upon rather than others.

The benefit arising from this supernatural assis which Christianity affords to natural religion, is what persons are very slow in apprehending; and yet it is a distinct in itself, and a very plain obvious one. For any, in good earnest, really say, that the bulk of ma in the heathen world were in as advantageous a situ with regard to natural religion, as they are now am us? that it was laid before them, and enforced upon in a manner as distinct, and as much tending to infl their practice?

The objections against all this, from the perversi Christianity, and from the supposition of its having ha little good influence, however innocently they may b posed, yet cannot be insisted upon as conclusive, upor principles but such as lead to downright atheism; be the manifestation of the law of nature by reason, whicl on all principles of theism, must have been from God, has perverted and rendered ineffectual in the same manne may indeed, I think, truly be said that the good effe Christianity have not been small; nor its supposed ill e at all of it, properly speaking. Perhaps, too, the t themselves done have been aggravated; and if not, tianity hath been often only a pretence; and the same in the main, would have been done upon some other pre However, great and shocking as the corruptions and a of it have really been, they cannot be insisted upon as ments against it, upon principles of theism. For one not proceed one step in reasoning upon natural religion more than upon Christianity, without laying it down first principle, that the dispensations of Providence ar to be judged of by their perversions, but by their ge tendencies; not by what they do actually seem to effec

by what they would effect if mankind did their part, that part which is justly put and left upon them. It is altogether as much the language of one, as of the other: *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.** The light of reason does not, any more than that of revelation, force men to submit to its authority: both admonish them of what they ought to do and avoid, together with the consequences of each; and, after this, leave them at full liberty to act just as they please, till the appointed time of judgment. Every moment's experience shows, that this is God's general rule of government.

To return, then: Christianity being a promulgation of the law of nature; being, moreover, an authoritative promulgation of it, with new light, and other circumstances of peculiar advantage, adapted to the wants of mankind; these things fully show its importance. And it is to be observed farther that as the nature of the case requires, so all Christians are commanded to contribute, by their profession of Christianity, to preserve it in the world, and render it such a promulgation and enforcement of religion. For it is the very scheme of the gospel, that each Christian should, in his degree, contribute towards continuing and carrying it on; all by uniting in the public profession, and external practice of Christianity; some by instructing, by having the oversight, and taking care of this religious community, the Church of God. Now this farther shows the importance of Christianity, and, which is what I chiefly intend, its importance in a practical sense, or the high obligations we are under, to take it into our most serious consideration: and the danger there must necessarily be, not only in treating it despitefully, which I am not now speaking of, but in disregarding and neglecting it. For this is neglecting to do what is expressly enjoined us, for continuing those benefits to the world, and transmitting them down to future times. And all this holds, even though the only thing to be considered in Christianity were its subserviency to natural religion. But,

II. Christianity is to be considered in a further view, as containing an account of a dispensation of things, not at all discoverable by reason, in consequence of which several distinct precepts are enjoined us. Christianity is not only an external institution of natural religion, and a new pro-

* Rev. xxii. 11.

mulgation of God's general providence, as righteous
nor and Judge of the world; but it contains also a rev
of a particular dispensation of Providence, carrying
his Son and Spirit, for the recovery and salvation of ma
who are represented, in Scripture, to be in a state o
And, in consequence of this revelation being made,
commanded *to be baptized*, not only *in the name of the*
but also *of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;* and other
tions of duty, unknown before, to the Son and the
Ghost, are revealed. Now, the importance of these
may be judged of, by observing that they arise, n
positive command merely, but also from the offices
appear, from Scripture, to belong to those divine per
the gospel dispensation, or from the relations which,
there informed, they stand in to us. By reason is re
the relation which God the Father stands in to us.
arises the obligation of duty which we are under to hir
Scripture are revealed the relations which the Son and
Spirit stand in to us. Hence arise the obligations o
which we are under to them. The truth of the case,
may speak, in each of these three respects, being adı
that God is the Governor of the World, upon the evide
reason; that Christ is the Mediator between God an
and the Holy Ghost our Guide and Sanctifier, upon t
dence of revelation: the truth of the case, I say, in e
these respects, being admitted, it is no more a questio
it should be commanded that we be baptized in the n
the Son and of the Holy Ghost, than that we be bapt
the name of the Father. This matter seems to req
be more fully stated.*

Let it be remembered, then, that religion comes unc
twofold consideration of internal and external; for the
is as real a part of religion, of true religion, as the f
Now, when religion is considered under the first not
an inward principle, to be exerted in such and such i
acts of the mind and heart, the essence of natural r
may be said to consist in religious regards to *God the*
Almighty; and the essence of revealed religion, as
guished from natural, to consist in religious regards
Son, and to *the Holy Ghost.* And the obligation we a
der, of paying these religious regards to each of the

* See the Nature, Obligation, and Efficacy, of the Christian
ments, &c. and *Colliber* on Revealed religion, as there quoted.

e persons respectively, arises from the respective relations ich they each stand in to us. How these relations are de known, whether by reason or revelation, makes no al- ation in the case; because the duties arise out of the rela- is themselves, not out of the manner in which we are in- med of them. The Son and Spirit have each his proper ce in that great dispensation of Providence, the redemp- n of the world; the one our Mediator, the other our Sanc- ir. Does not, then, the duty of religious regards to both se divine persons, as immediately arise, to the view of son, out of the very nature of these offices and relations, he inward good will and kind attention, which we owe to fellow-creatures, arises out of the common relations be- een us and them? But it will be asked, 'What are the ard religious regards, appearing thus obviously due to the n and Holy Spirit, as arising, not merely from command Scripture, but from the very nature of the revealed rela- is which they stand in to us?' I answer, the religious ards of reverence, honor, love, trust, gratitude, fear, hope. what external manner this inward worship is to be ex- ssed, is a matter of pure revealed command; as perhaps, external manner in which God the Father is to be wor- ped, may be more so than we are ready to think; but worship, the internal worship itself, to the Son and Ho- Ghost, is no farther matter of pure revealed command, n as the relations they stand in to us, are matter of pure elation; for the relations being known, the obligations to h internal worship are obligations of reason, arising out hose relations themselves. In short, the history of the pel as immediately shows us the reason of these obliga- s, as it shows us the meaning of the words, Son and Ho- Ghost.

f this account of the Christian religion be just, those per- s who can speak lightly of it, as of little consequence, provi- natural religion be kept to, plainly forget, that Chris- ity, even what is peculiarly so called, as distinguished n natural religion, has yet somewhat very important, even moral nature. For the office of our Lord being made known, the relation he stands in to us, the obligation of religious ards to him is plainly moral, as much as charity to man- l is; since this obligation arises, before external com- nd, immediately out of that his office and relation itself. ese persons appear to forget, that revelation is to be con- red as informing us of somewhat new in the state of man-

kind, and in the goverment of the world; as acquainting with some relations we stand in, which could not otherw have been known. And these relations being real, (tho before revelation we could be under no obligations from th yet upon their being revealed,) there is no reason to think, that neglect of behaving suitably to them will be atten with the same kind of consequences under God's governm as neglecting to behave suitably to any other relations m known to us by reason. And ignorance, whether unavo ble or voluntary, so far as we can possibly see, will, just much, and just as little, excuse in one case as in the oth the ignorance being supposed equally unavoidable, equally voluntary, in both cases.

If, therefore, Christ be indeed the Mediator between G and man, *i. e.* if Christianity be true; if he be indeed Lord, our Saviour, and our God, no one can say what n follow, not only the obstinate, but the careless, disregarc him in those high relations. Nay, no one can say w may follow such disregard, even in the way of natural c sequence. For, as the natural consequences of vice in l life are doubtless to be considered as judicial punishme inflicted by God, so likewise, for aught we know, the judi punishments of the future life may be, in a like way, c like sense, the natural consequence of vice;† of men's lating or disregarding the relations which God has pla them in here, and made known to them.

Again, If mankind are corrupted and depraved in tl moral character, and so are unfit for that state which Ch is gone to prepare for his disciples; and if the assistanc God's Spirit be necessary to renew their nature, in a deg requisite to their being qualified for that state; all which implied in the express, though figurative, declaration, *cept a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the ki dom of God*:‡ supposing this, is it possible any serious p son can think it a slight matter, whether or no he ma use of the means, expressly commanded by God, for obt ing this divine assistance? especially since the whole an gy of nature shows, that we are not to expect any benef without making use of the appointed means for obtaining enjoying them. Now, reason shows us nothing of the p icular immediate means of obtaining either temporal

† Chap. 5. ‡ John iii. 5.

spiritual benefits. This, therefore, we must learn, either from experience or revelation. And experience the present case does not admit of.

The conclusion from all this evidently is, that Christianity being supposed either true or credible, it is unspeakable irreverence, and really the most presumptuous rashness, to treat it as a light matter. It can never justly be esteemed of little consequence, till it be positively supposed false. Nor do I know a higher and more important obligation which we are under, than that of examining most seriously into the evidence of it, supposing its credibility; and of embracing it, upon supposition of its truth.

The two following deductions may be proper to be added, in order to illustrate the foregoing observations, and to prevent their being mistaken.

First, Hence we may clearly see, where lies the distinction between what is positive and what is moral in religion. Moral *precepts* are precepts, the reasons of which we see; positive *precepts* are precepts, the reasons of which we do not see.* Moral *duties* arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command. Positive *duties* do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all, were it not for such command received from him, whose creatures and subjects we are. But the manner in which the nature of the case, or the fact of the relation, is made known, this doth not denominate any duty, either positive or moral. That we be baptized in the name of the Father, is as much a positive duty as that we be baptized in the name of the Son; because both arise equally from revealed command: though the relation which we stand in to God the Father, is made known to us by reason; the relation we stand in to Christ, by revelation only. On the other hand, the dispensation of the gospel admitted, gratitude as immediately becomes due to Christ, from his being the voluntary minister of this dispensation, as it is due to God the Father, from his being the fountain of all good; though the first is made known to us by revelation only, the second by reason. Hence also we

* This is the distinction between moral and positive precepts, considered respectively as such. But yet, since the latter have somewhat of a moral nature, we may see the reason of them considered in this view. Moral and positive precepts are in some respects alike, in other respects different. So far as they are alike, we discern the reasons of both; so far as they are different, we discern the reasons of the former, but not of the latter.

may see. and, for distinctness sake, it may be worth mentioning, that positive institutions come under a twofold consideration. They are either institutions founded on natural religion, as baptism in the name of the Father; though this has also a particular reference to the gospel dispensation, for it is in the name of God, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; or they are external institutions founded on revealed religion, as baptism in the name of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, From the distinction between what is moral and what is positive in religion, appears the ground of that peculiar preference, which the Scripture teaches us to be due to the former.

The reason of positive institutions in general is very obvious, though we should not see the reason why such particular ones are pitched upon, rather than others. Whoever, therefore, instead of cavilling at words, will attend to the thing itself, may clearly see, that positive institutions in general, as distinguished from this or that particular one, have the nature of moral commands: since the reasons of them appear. Thus, for instance, the *external* worship of God is a moral duty, though no particular mode of it be so. Care then is to be taken, when a comparison is made between positive and moral duties, that they be compared no farther than as they are different; no farther than as the former are positive, or arise out of mere external command, the reasons of which we are not acquainted with; and as the latter are moral, or arise out of the apparent reason of the case, without such external command. Unless this caution be observed, we shall run into endless confusion.

Now, this being premised, suppose two standing precepts enjoined by the same authority; that, in certain conjunctures it is impossible to obey both; that the former is moral, *i. e.* a precept of which we see the reasons, and that they hold in the particular case before us; but that the latter is positive, *i. e.* a precept of which we do not see the reasons: it is indisputable that our obligations are to obey the former, because there is an apparent reason for this preference, and none against it. Farther, positive institutions, I suppose all those which Christianity enjoins, are means to a moral end; and the end must be acknowledged more excellent than the means. Nor is observance of these institutions any religious obedience at all, or of any value, otherwise than as it proceeds from a moral principle. This seems to be the strict

gical way of stating and determining this matter; but ill, perhaps, be found less applicable to practice, than may thought at first sight.

And therefore, in a more practical, though more lax way consideration, and taking the words, *moral law* and *positive stitutions*, in the popular sense; I add, that the whole oral law is as much matter of revealed command, as posi-e institutions are; for the scripture enjoins every moral rtue. In this respect, then, they are both upon a level. ut the moral law is, moreover, written upon our hearts, in-rwoven into our very nature. And this is a plain intima-on of the Author of it, which is to be preferred, when they terfere.

But there is not altogether so much necessity for the de-rmination of this question as some persons seem to think. for are we left to reason alone to determine it. For, *first*, hough mankind have in all ages been greatly prone to lace their religion in peculiar positive rites, by way of equi-len for obedience to moral precepts; yet, without making ny comparison at all between them, and consequently with-ut determining which is to have the preference, the nature the thing abundantly shows all notions of that kind to be tterly subversive of true religion; as they are, moreover ontrary to the whole general tenor of Scripture, and like-ise to the most express particular declarations of it, that othing can render us accepted of God, without moral virtue. *econdly*, Upon the occasion of mentioning together positive nd moral duties, the Scripture always puts the stress of re-gion upon the latter, and never upon the former; which, hough no sort of allowance to neglect the former, when they o not interfere with the latter, yet is a plain intimation, that hen they do, the latter are to be preferred. And, farther, s mankind are for placing the stress of their religion any here, rather than upon virtue, lest both the reason of the ning, and the general spirit of Christianity, appearing in the ntimation now mentioned, should be ineffectual against this revalent folly; our Lord himself, from whose command lone the obligation of positive institutions arises, has taken ccasion to make the comparison between them and moral precepts, when the Pharisees censured him for *eating with ublicans and sinners*; and also when they censured his dis-iples for *plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath day*. Upon his comparison he has determined expressly, and in form, which shall have the preference when they interfere. And

by delivering his authoritative determination in a proverbial manner of expression, he has made it general: *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.** The propriety of the word *proverbial* is not the thing insisted upon, though, I think, the manner of speaking is to be called so. But that the manner of speaking very remarkably renders the determination general is surely indisputable. For, had it, in the latter case, been said only, that God preferred mercy to the rigid observance of the Sabbath, even then, by parity of reason, most justly might we have argued, that he preferred mercy, likewise, to the observance of other ritual institutions, and, in general, moral duties to positive ones. And thus the determination would have been general, though its being so were inferred, and not expressed. But as the passage really stands in the gospel, it is much stronger; for the sense, and the very literal words of our Lord's answer, are as applicable to any other instance of a comparison, between positive and moral duties, as to this upon which they were spoken. And if, in case of competition, mercy is to be preferred to positive institutions, it will scarce be thought, that justice is to give place to them. It is remarkable, too, that, as the words are a quotation from the Old Testament, they are introduced, on both of the forementioned occasions, with a declaration, that the Pharisees did not understand the meaning of them. This, I say, is very remarkable; for, since it is scarce possible for the most ignorant person not to understand the literal sense of the passage in the Prophet,† and since understanding the literal sense would not have prevented their *condemning the guiltless*,‡ it can hardly be doubted, that the thing which our Lord really intended in that declaration was, that the Pharisees had not learnt from it, as they might, wherein the *general* spirit of religion consists: that it consists in moral piety and virtue, as distinguished from forms and ritual observances. However, it is certain we may learn this from his divine application of the passage, in the gospel.

But, as it is one of the peculiar weaknesses of human nature, when, upon a comparison of two things, one is found to be of greater importance than the other, to consider this other as of scarce any importance at all; it is highly necessary that we remind ourselves, how great presumption it is to make light

* Matt. ix. 13, and xii. 7. † Hos. vi.
‡ See Matt. xii. 7.

any institutions of divine appointment; that our obligations obey all God's commands whatever, are absolute and indispensable; and that commands merely positive, admitted be from him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them: obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense.

To these things I cannot forbear adding, that the account ow given of Christianity most strongly shows and enforces pon us the obligation of searching the Scriptures, in order see what the scheme of revelation really is instead of deterining beforehand, from reason, what the scheme of it ust be.* Indeed, if in revelation there be found any pasges, the seeming meaning of which is contrary to natural ligion, we may most certainly conclude such seeming eaning not to be the real one. But it is not any degree of esumption against an interpretation of Scriptures, that such terpretation contains a doctrine, which the light of nature nnot discover, or a precept, which the law of nature does t oblige to.

* See Chap. 3.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Supposed Presumption against a Revelation, considered as Miraculous.

HAVING shown the importance of the Christian revelation, and the obligations which we are under seriously to attend to it, upon supposition of its truth or its credibility; the next thing in order is, to consider the supposed presumptions against revelation in general, which shall be the subject of this chapter; and the objections against the Christian in particular, which shall be the subject of some following ones.* For it seems the most natural method to remove these prejudices against Christianity, before we proceed to the consideration of the positive evidence for it, and the objections against that evidence.†

It is, I think, commonly supposed, that there is some peculiar presumption, from the analogy of nature, against the Christian scheme of things, at least against miracles; so as that stronger evidence is necessary to prove the truth and reality of them, than would be sufficient to convince us of other events or matters of fact. Indeed, the consideration of this supposed presumption cannot but be thought very insignificant by many persons; yet, as it belongs to the subject of this treatise, so it may tend to open the mind, and remove some prejudices; however needless the consideration of it be, upon its own account.

I. I find no appearance of a presumption, from the analogy of nature, against the general scheme of Christianity, that God created and invisibly governs the world by Jesus Christ, and by him also will hereafter judge it in righteousness, *i. e.* render to every one according to his works; and that good men are under the secret influence of his Spirit.

* Chap. 3, 4, 5, 6 † Chap. 7.

Whether these things are, or are not, to be called miraculous, is, perhaps, only a question about words; or, however, is of no moment in the case. If the analogy of nature raises any presumption against this general scheme of Christianity, it must be, either because it is not discoverable by reason or experience, or else because it is unlike that course of nature, which is. But analogy raises no presumption against the truth of this scheme, upon either of these accounts.

First, There is no presumption, from analogy, against the truth of it, upon account of its not being discoverable by reason or experience. For, suppose one who never heard of revelation, of the most improved understanding, and acquainted with our whole system of natural philosophy and natural religion; such a one could not but be sensible, that it was but a very small part of the natural and moral system of the universe, which he was acquainted with. He could not but be sensible, that there must be innumerable things, in the dispensations of Providence past, in the invisible government over the world at present carrying on, and in what is to come, of which he was wholly ignorant, and which could not be discovered without revelation. Whether the scheme of nature be, in the strictest sense, infinite or not, it is evidently vast, even beyond all possible imagination. And, doubtless, that part of it which is opened to our view, is but as a point, in comparison of the whole plan of Providence, reaching throughout eternity, past and future; in comparison of what is even now going on in the remote parts of the boundless universe; nay, in comparison of the whole scheme of this world. And, therefore, that things lie beyond the natural reach of our faculties, is no sort of presumption against the truth and reality of them; because it is certain, there are innumerable things in the constitution and government of the universe, which are thus beyond the natural reach of our faculties. *Secondly*, Analogy raises no presumption against any of the things contained in this general doctrine of Scripture now mentioned, upon account of their being unlike the known course of nature. For there is no presumption at all, from analogy, that the *whole* course of things, or divine government, naturally unknown to us, and *every thing* in it, is like to any thing in that which is known; and therefore no peculiar presumption against any thing in the former, upon account of its being unlike to any thing in

the latter. And in the constitution and natural governm of the world, as well as in the moral government of it, see things, in a great degree, unlike one another: and th fore ought not to wonder at such unlikeness between th visible and invisible. However, the scheme of Christia is by no means entirely unlike the scheme of nature; as appear in the following part of this treatise.

The notion of a miracle, considered as a proof of a vine mission, has been stated with great exactness b vines; and is, I think, sufficiently understood by every There are also invisible miracles; the incarnation of Ch for instance, which, being secret, cannot be alledged a proof of such a mission; but require themselves to be ved by visible miracles. Revelation, itself, too, is miracu and miracles are the proof of it; and the supposed presu tion against these shall presently be considered. All wh I have been observing here is, that, whether we choos call every thing in the dispensations of Providence, not coverable without revelation, nor like the known cours things, miraculous; and whether the general Christian penetration now mentioned, is to be called so, or not; the f going observations seem certainly to show, that there i presumption against it, from the analogy of nature.

II. There is no presumption, from analogy, against s operations, which we should now call miraculous; part larly, none against a revelation, at the beginning of world; nothing of such presumptions against it, as is posed to be implied or expressed in the word *miracu* For a miracle, in its very notion, is relative to a cours nature; and implies somewhat different from it, consid as being so. Now, either there was no course of natur the time which we are speaking of; or if there were, we not acquainted what the course of nature is upon the peopling of worlds. And therefore the question, whe mankind had a revelation made to them at that time is t considered, not as a question concerning a miracle, but a common question of fact. And we have the like reason, it more or less, to admit the report of tradition concern this question and concerning common matters of fact of same antiquity; for instance, what part of the earth first peopled.

Or thus: When mankind was first placed in this st there was a power exerted, totally different from the pres course of nature. Now, whether this power, thus wh

different from the present course of nature; for we cannot properly apply to it the word *miraculous*; whether this power stopped immediately after it had made man, or went on, and exerted itself farther in giving him a revelation, is a question of the same kind, as whether an ordinary power exerted itself in such a particular degree and manner, or not.

Or suppose the power exerted in the formation of the world be considered as miraculous, or rather, be called by the name, the case will not be different; since it must be acknowledged, that such a power was exerted. For supposing it acknowledged that our Saviour spent some years in a course of working miracles; there is no more presumption, worth mentioning, against his having exerted this miraculous power, in a certain degree greater, than in a certain degree less; in one or two more instances, than in one or two fewer; in this, than in another manner.

It is evident, then, that there can be no peculiar presumption, from the analogy of nature, against supposing a revelation, when man was first placed upon the earth.

Add, that there does not appear the least intimation in history or tradition, that religion was first reasoned out; but the whole of history and tradition makes for the other side, that it came into the world by revelation. Indeed, the state of religion in the first ages, of which we have any account seems to suppose and imply, that this was the original of it amongst mankind. And these reflections together, without taking in the peculiar authority of Scripture, amount to real and very material degree of evidence, that there was a revelation at the beginning of the world. Now this, as it is a confirmation of natural religion, and therefore mentioned in the former part of this treatise; so, likewise, it has a tendency to remove any prejudices against a subsequent revelation.

III. But still it may be objected, that there is some peculiar presumption from analogy, against miracles; particularly against revelation, after the settlement and during the continuance of a course of nature.

Now, with regard to this supposed presumption, it is to be observed in general, that before we can have ground for raising what can, with any propriety, be called an *argument* from analogy, for or against revelation considered as somewhat miraculous, we must be acquainted with a similar or

parallel case. But the history of some other world, seemingly in like circumstances with our own, is no more than a parallel case; and therefore nothing short of this can be so. Yet, could we come at a presumptive proof, for or against a revelation, from being informed whether such world had one, or not; such a proof, being drawn from one single instance only, must be infinitely precarious. More particularly: First of all, There is a very strong presumption against common speculative truths, and against the most ordinary facts, before the proof of them; which yet is overcome by almost any proof. There is a presumption of millions to one, against the story of *Cæsar*, or of any other man. For suppose a number of common facts so and so circumstanced, of which one had no kind of proof, should happen to come into one's thoughts; every one would, without any possible doubt, conclude them to be false. And the like may be said of a single common fact. And from hence it appears, that the question of importance, as to the matter before us, is, concerning the degree of the peculiar presumption supposed against miracles; not whether there be any peculiar presumption at all against them. For, if there be the presumption of millions to one, against the most common facts, what can a small presumption, additional to this, amount to, though it be peculiar? It cannot be estimated, and is as nothing. The only material question is, whether there be any such presumption against miracles, as to render them in any sort incredible? *Secondly*, If we leave out the consideration of religion, we are in such total darkness, upon what causes, occasions, reasons, or circumstances, the present course of nature depends, that there does not appear any improbability for or against supposing, that five or six thousand years may have given scope for causes, occasions, reasons, or circumstances, from whence miraculous interpositions may have arisen. And from this, joined with the foregoing observation, it will follow, that there must be a presumption, beyond all comparison, greater, against the *particular* common facts just now instanced in, than against miracles *in general*; before any evidence of either. But, *thirdly*, Take in the consideration of religion, or the moral system of the world, and then we see distinct particular reasons for miracles; to afford mankind instruction additional to that of nature, and to attest the truth of it. And this gives a real credibility to the supposition, that it might be part of the original plan of things, that there should be miraculous interpositions. Then, *lastly*, Miracles must not be

ıred to common natural events; or to events which, h uncommon, are similar to what we daily experience;) the extraordinary phenomena of nature. And then ɔmparison will be, between the presumption against es, and the presumption against such uncommon ap- ıces, suppose, as comets, and against there being any ɔowers in nature as magnetism and electricity, so con- :o the properties of other bodies not endued with these s. And before any one can determine, whether there y peculiar presumption against miracles, more than ıt other extraordinary things, he must consider, what, irst hearing, would be the presumption against the last ɪned appearances and powers, to a person acquainted /ith the daily, monthly, and annual course of nature ting this earth, and with those common powers of which we every day see.

ɪn all this I conclude, That there certainly is no such ɲption against miracles, as to render them in any wise ible; that, on the contrary, our being able to discern s for them, gives a positive credibility to the history of in cases where those reasons hold; and that it is by ans certain, that there is any peculiar presumption at m analogy, even in the lowest degree, against miracles, ınguished from other extraordinary phenomena; though ıt worth while to perplex the reader with inquiries into stract nature of evidence, in order to determine a ques- /hich, without such inquiries, we see is of no impor-

CHAPTER III.

Of our Incapacity of Judging, what were to be expected in a Revelation; and the Credibility from Analogy, that it must contain Things appearing liable to Objections.

BESIDES the objections against the evidence for Christianity, many are alleged against the scheme of it; against the whole manner in which it is put and left with the world; as well as against several particular relations in Scripture: objections drawn from the deficiencies of revelation: from things in it appearing to men *foolishness*;* from its containing matters of offence, which have led, and it must have been foreseen, would lead, into strange enthusiasm and superstition, and be made to serve the purposes of tyranny and wickedness; from its not being universal; and, which is a thing of the same kind, from its evidence not being so convincing and satisfactory as it might have been; for this last is sometimes turned into a positive argument against its truth.† It would be tedious, indeed impossible, to enumerate the several particulars comprehended under the objections here referred to, they being so various, according to the different fancies of men. There are persons, who think it a strong objection against the authority of Scripture, that it is not composed by rules of art, agreed upon by critics, for polite and correct writing. And the scorn is inexpressible, with which some of the prophetic parts of Scripture are treated; partly through the rashness of interpreters, but very much also on account of the hieroglyphical and figurative language in which they are left us. Some of the principal things of this sort shall be particularly considered in the following chapters. But my design at present is to observe, in general, with respect to this whole way of arguing, that, upon supposition of a revelation,

* 1 Cor. i. 18. † See Chap. 6.

it is highly credible beforehand, we should be incompetent judges of it, to a great degree; and that it would contain many things appearing to us liable to great objections, in case we judge of it otherwise than by the analogy of nature. And, therefore, though objections against the evidence of Christianity are more seriously to be considered, yet objections against Christianity itself are, in a great measure, frivolous; almost all objections against it, excepting those which are alleged against the particular proofs of its coming from God. I express myself with caution, lest I should be mistaken to vilify reason, which is indeed the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning any thing, even revelation itself; or be misunderstood to assert, that a supposed revelation cannot be proved false from internal characters. For, it may contain clear immoralities or contradictions; and either of these would prove it false.. Nor will I take upon me to affirm, that nothing else can possibly render any supposed revelation incredible. Yet still the observation above is, I think, true beyond doubt, that objections against Christianity, as distinguished from objections against its evidence, are frivolous. To make out this, is the general design of the present chapter. And, with regard to the whole of it, I cannot but particularly wish, that the proofs might be attended to, rather than the assertions cavilled at, upon account of any unacceptable consequences, whether real or supposed, which may be drawn from them. For after all, that which is true, must be admitted; though it should show us the shortness of our faculties, and that we are in nowise judges of many things of which we are apt to think ourselves very competent ones. Nor will this be any objection with reasonable men; at least, upon second thought, it will not be any objection with such, against the justness of the following observations.

As God governs the world, and instructs his creatures, according to certain laws or rules, in the known course of nature, known by reason together with experience; so the Scripture informs us of a scheme of divine Providence, additional to this. It relates, that God has, by revelation, instructed men in things concerning his government, which they could not otherwise have known, and reminded them of things which they might otherwise know; and attested the truth of the whole by miracles. Now, if the natural and the revealed dispensation of things are both from God, if they coincide with each other, and together make up one schema

of Providence, our being incompetent judges of one, must render it credible that we may be incompetent judges also of the other. Since, upon experience, the acknowledged constitution and course of nature is found to be greatly different from what, before experience, would have been expected; and such as, men fancy, there lie great objections against: This renders it beforehand highly credible, that they may find the revealed dispensation likewise, if they judge of it as they do of the constitution of nature, very different from expectations formed beforehand; and liable, in appearance, to great objections: objections against the scheme itself, and against the degrees and manners of the miraculous interpositions, by which it was attested and carried on. Thus, suppose a prince to govern his dominions in the wisest manner possible, by common known laws; and that upon some exigencies he should suspend these laws, and govern, in several instances, in a different manner: if one of his subjects were not a competent judge beforehand, by what common rules the government should or would be carried on, it could not be expected that the same person would be a competent judge, in what exigencies, or in what manner, or to what degree, those laws commonly observed would be suspended or deviated from. If he were not a judge of the wisdom of the ordinary administration, there is no reason to think he would be a judge of the wisdom of the extraordinary. If he thought he had objections against the former, doubtless, it is highly supposable, he might think also, that he had objections against the latter. And thus, as we fall into infinite follies and mistakes, whenever we pretend, otherwise than from experience and analogy, to judge of the constitution and course of nature, it is evidently supposable beforehand, that we should fall into as great, in pretending to judge, in like manner, concerning revelation. Nor is there any more ground to expect that this latter should appear to us clear of objections, than that the former should.

These observations, relating to the whole of Christianity, are applicable to inspiration in particular. As we are in no sort judges beforehand, by what laws or rules, in what degree, or by what means, it were to have been expected that God would naturally instruct us; so, upon supposition of his affording us light and instruction by revelation, additional to what he has afforded us by reason and experience, we are in no sort judges, by what methods, and in what proportion, it were to be expected that this supernatural light and instruc-

on would be afforded us. We know not beforehand, what degree or kind of natural information it were to be expected God would afford men, each by his own reason and experience; nor how far he would enable, and effectually dispose them to communicate it, whatever it should be, to each other; or whether the evidence of it would be certain, highly probable, or doubtful; nor whether it would be given with equal earness and conviction to all. Nor could we guess, upon ny good ground I mean, whether natural knowledge, or ven the faculty itself by which we are capable of attaining , reason, would be given us at once, or gradually. In like anner, we are wholly ignorant what degree of new knowdge it were to be expected God would give mankind by velation, upon supposition of his affording one; or how far, in what way, he would interpose miraculously, to qualify em, to whom he should originally make the revelation, for mmunicating the knowledge given by it; and to secure eir doing it to the age in which they should live, and to cure its being transmitted to posterity. We are equally norant, whether the evidence of it would be certain, or ighly probable, or doubtful;* or whether all who should ave any degree of instruction from it, and any degree of evience of its truth, would have the same; or whether the heme would be revealed at once, or unfolded gradually. Jay, we are not in any sort able to judge, whether it were to ave been expected, that the revelation should have been ommitted to writing; or left to be handed down, and consequently corrupted, by verbal tradition, and at length sunk nder it, if mankind so pleased, and during such time as they re permitted, in the degree they evidently are, to act as they ill

But it may be said, 'that a revelation in some of the bove-mentioned circumstances; one, for instance, which was ot committed to writing, and thus secured against danger of orruption, would not have answered its purpose.' I ask, hat purpose? It would not have answered all the purposes hich it has now answered, and in the same degree; but it ould have answered others, or the same in different degrees. nd which of these were the purposes of God, and best fell n with his general government, we could not at all have determined beforehand.

Now since it has been shown, that we have no principles

* See Chap. 6.

of reason upon which to judge beforehand, how it were to l
expected revelation should have been left, or what was mo
suitable to the divine plan of government, in any of the for
mentioned respects; it must be quite frivolous to object afte
wards as to any of them, against its being left in one wa
rather than another; for this would be to object again
things, upon account of their being different from expect
tions which have been shown to be without reason. A
thus we see, that the only question concerning the truth
Christianity is, whether it be a real revelation; not wheth
it be attended with every circumstance which we shou
have looked for: and concerning the authority of Scriptu
whether it be what it claims to be; not whether it be a bo
of such sort, and so promulged, as weak men are apt
fancy a book containing a divine revelation should. A
therefore neither obscurity, nor seeming inaccuracy of sty
nor various readings, nor early disputes about the authors
particular parts, nor any other things of the like kind, thou
they had been much more considerable in degree than th
are, could overthrow the authority of the Scripture; unle
the Prophets, Apostles, or our Lord, had promised, that t
book, containing the divine revelation, should be secure fro
those things. Nor indeed can any objections overthrow su
a kind of revelation as the Christian claims to be, since the
are no objections against the morality of it, but such as c
show, that there is no proof of miracles wrought originally
attestation of it; no appearance of any thing miraculous
its obtaining in the world; nor any of prophecy, that i
of events foretold, which human sagacity could not forese
If it can be shown, that the proof alleged for all these is a
solutely none at all, then is revelation overturned. But we
it allowed, that the proof of any one, or all of them, is low
than is allowed; yet whilst any proof of them remains, rev
lation will stand upon much the same foot it does at preser
as to all the purposes of life and practice, and ought to ha
the like influence upon our behaviour.

From the foregoing observations, too, it will follow, a
those who will thoroughly examine into revelation will fi
it worth remarking, that there are several ways of arguin
which, though just with regard to other writings, are not a
plicable to Scripture; at least not to the prophetic parts of
We cannot argue, for instance, that this cannot be the sen

or intent of such a passage of Scripture, for if it had, it would have been expressed more plainly, or have been represented under a more apt figure or hieroglyphic; yet we may justly argue thus, with respect to common books. And the reason of this difference is very evident; that in Scripture we are not competent judges, as we are in common books, how plainly it were to have been expected, what is the true sense should have been expressed, or under how apt an image figured. The only question is, what appearance there is that this is the sense? and scarce at all, how much more determinately or accurately it might have been expressed or figured?

'But is it not self-evident, that internal improbabilities of all kinds, weaken external probable proof?' Doubtless. But to what practical purpose can this be alleged here, when it has been proved before, that real internal improbabilities, which rise even to moral certainty, are overcome by the most ordinary testimony? and when it now has been made appear, that we scarce know what are improbabilities, as to the matter we are here considering? as it will farther appear from what follows.

For though, from the observations above made, it is manifest, that we are not in any sort competent judges, what supernatural instruction were to have been expected; and though it is self-evident, that the objections of an incompetent judgment must be frivolous; yet it may be proper to go one step farther, and observe, that if men will be regardless of these things, and pretend to judge of the Scripture by preconceived expectations, the analogy of nature shows beforehand, not only that it is highly credible they may, but also probable that they will, imagine they have strong objections against it, however really unexceptionable: for so, prior to experience, they would think they had, against the circumstances, and degrees, and the whole manner of that instruction, which is afforded by the ordinary course of nature. Were the instruction which God affords to brute creatures by instincts and mere propensions, and to mankind by these together with reason, matter of probable proof, and not of certain observation, it would be rejected as incredible, in many instances of it, only upon account of the means by which this instruction is given, the seeming disproportions, the limitations, necessary conditions, and circumstances of it. For instance: Would it not have been thought highly improbable,

that men should have been so much more capable of di vering, even to certainty, the general laws of matter, and magnitudes, paths, and revolutions of the heavenly bod than the occasions and cures of distempers, and many o things, in which human life seems so much more nearly cerned, than in astronomy? How capricious and irregul way of information, would it be said, is that of *invention* means of which nature instructs us in matters of science, in many things upon which the affairs of the world gre depend; that a man should, by this faculty be made quainted with a thing in an instant, when, perhaps, h thinking of somewhat else, which he has in vain been sea ing after, it may be, for years. So likewise the imperfect attending the only method by which nature enables and rects us to communicate our thoughts to each other, ar numerable. Language is, in its very nature, inadequ ambiguous, liable to infinite abuse, even from negligen and so liable to it from design, that every man can dec and betray by it. And, to mention but one instance m that brutes, without reason, should act, in many respe with a sagacity and foresight vastly greater than what have in those respects, would be thought impossible. Y is certain they do act with such superior foresight; whe it be their own, indeed, is another question. From t things it is highly credible beforehand, that upon suppos God should afford men some additional instruction by rev tion, it would be with circumstances, in manners, deg and respects, which we should be apt to fancy we had g objections against the credibility of. Nor are the object against the Scripture, nor against Christianity in genera all more or greater than the analogy of nature would be hand,—not perhaps give ground to expect; for this ana may not be sufficient, in some cases, to ground an expe tion upon;—but no more nor greater, than analogy w show it, beforehand, to be supposable and credible, that t might seem to lie against revelation.

By applying these general observations to a particular jection, it will be more distinctly seen, how they are app ble to others of the like kind; and indeed to almost all jections against Christianity, as distinguished from object against its evidence. It appears from Scripture, that as it not unusual, in the apostolic age, for persons, upon their version to Christianity, to be endued with miraculous gi so, some of those persons exercised these gifts in a stran

irregular and disorderly manner: and this is made an objection against their being really miraculous. Now, the foregoing observations quite remove this objection, how considerable soever it may appear at first sight. For, consider a person endued with any of these gifts, for instance, that of tongues; it is to be supposed, that he had the same power over this miraculous gift, as he would have had over it, had it been the effect of habit, of study, and use, as it ordinarily is; or the same power over it, as he had over any other natural endowment. Consequently, he would use it in the same manner he did any other; either regularly and upon proper occasions only, or irregularly and upon improper ones; according to his sense of decency, and his character of prudence. Where, then, is the objection? Why, if this miraculous power was indeed given to the world to propagate Christianity and attest the truth of it, we might, it seems, have expected, that other sort of persons should have been chosen to be invested with it; or that these should, at the same time, have been endued with prudence; or that they should have been continually restrained and directed in the exercise of it; *i. e.* that God should have miraculously interposed, if at all, in a different manner or higher degree. But, from the observations made above, it is undeniably evident, that we are not judges in what degrees and manners it were to have been expected he should miraculously interpose; upon supposition of his doing it in some degree and manner. Nor, in the natural course of Providence, are superior gifts of memory, eloquence, knowledge, and other talents of great influence, conferred only on persons of prudence and decency, or such as are disposed to make the properest use of them. Nor is the instruction and admonition naturally afforded us for the conduct of life, particularly in our education, commonly given in a manner the most suited to recommend it; but often with circumstances, apt to prejudice us against such instruction.

One might go on to add, that there is a great resemblance between the light of nature and of revelation, in several other respects. Practical Christianity, or that faith and behaviour which renders a man a Christian, is a plain and obvious thing; like the common rules of conduct, with respect to our ordinary temporal affairs. The more distinct and particular knowledge of those things, the study of which the Apostle calls, *going on unto perfection*,* and of the prophetic parts

* Heb. vi. 1.

of revelation, like many parts of natural and even civil k ledge, may require very exact thought and careful consi tion. The hinderances, too, of natural and of superna light and knowledge, have been of the same kind. An it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet u stood, so, if it ever comes to be understood, before the re *tion of all things*,* and without miraculous interpositio must be in the same way as natural knowledge is con by the continuance and progress of learning and of lil and by particular persons, attending to, comparing anc suing, intimations scattered up and down it, which are looked and disregarded by the generality of the world. this is the way in which all improvements are made thoughtful men tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dr us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come int minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible, that a book, v has been so long in the possession of mankind, should tain many truths as yet undiscovered. For, all the phenomena, and the same faculties of investigation, which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have made in the present and last age, were equally in th session of mankind several thousand years before. Anc sibly it might be intended, that events, as they come to should open and ascertain the meaning of several pa Scripture.

It may be objected, that this analogy fails in a materi spect; for that natural knowledge is of little or no c quence. But I have been speaking of the general instru which nature does or does not afford us. And besides, parts of natural knowledge, in the more common restr sense of the words, are of the greatest consequence t ease and convenience of life. But suppose the analog as it does not, fail in this respect, yet it might be abund supplied from the whole constitution and course of na which shows, that God does not dispense his gifts acco to our notions of the advantage and consequence they w be of to us. And this in general, with his method o pensing knowledge in particular, would together mak an analogy full to the point before us.

But it may be objected still farther, and more gener "The Scripture represents the world as in a state of ruin Christianity as an expedient to recover it, to help in thes

* Acts iii. 21.

pects where nature fails; in particular to supply the deficiencies of natural light. Is it credible, then, that so many ages should have been let pass, before a matter of such a sort, of so great and so general importance, was made known to mankind; and then that it should be made known to so small a part of them? Is it conceivable, that this supply should be so very deficient, should have the like obscurity and doubtfulness, be liable to the like perversions, in short, lie open to all the like objections, as the light of nature itself?'* Without determining how far this in fact is so, I answer, it is by no means incredible that it might be so, if the light of nature and of revelation be from the same hand. Men are naturally liable to diseases; for which God, in his good providence, has provided natural remedies.† But remedies existing in nature have been unknown to mankind for many ages; are known but to few now; probably many valuable ones are not known yet. Great has been, and is, the obscurity and difficulty, in the nature and application of them. Circumstances seem often to make them very improper, where they are absolutely necessary. It is after long labor and study, and many unsuccessful endeavours, that they are brought to be as useful as they are; after high contempt and absolute rejection of the most useful we have; and after disputes and doubts, which have seemed to be endless. The best remedies, too, when unskilfully, much more if dishonestly, applied, may produce new diseases; and, with the rightest application, the success of them is often doubtful. In many cases, they are not at all effectual; where they are, it is often very slowly: and the application of them, and the necessary regimen accompanying it, is, not uncommonly, so disagreeable, that some will not submit to them; and satisfy themselves with the excuse, that if they would, it is not certain whether it would be successful. And many persons, who labor under diseases, for which there are known natural remedies, are not so happy as to be always, if ever, in the way of them. In a word, the remedies which nature has provided for diseases, are neither certain, perfect, nor universal. And indeed the same principles of arguing, which would lead us to conclude that they must be so, would lead us likewise to conclude that there could be no occasion for them; *i. e.* that there could be no diseases at all. And, therefore, our experience that there are diseases, shows, that it is credible beforehand, upon supposition nature

* Chap. 6. † See Chap. 5.

has provided remedies for them, that these remedies ma as by experience we find they are, not certain, nor perfec universal; because it shows, that the principles upon v we should expect the contrary, are fallacious.

And now, what is the just consequence from all things? Not that reason is no judge of what is offered to being of divine revelation. For this would be to infer, th are unable to judge of any thing, because we are unal judge of all things. Reason can, and it ought to j not only of the meaning, but also of the morality an evidence, of revelation. *First*, It is the province of son to judge of the morality of the Scripture; *i. e.* not ther it contains things different from what we should expected from a wise, just and good Being; for objec from hence have been now obviated; but whether it con things plainly contradictory to wisdom, justice, or goodnes what the light of nature teaches us of God. And I kno thing of this sort objected against Scripture, excepting suc jections as are formed upon suppositions, which would eq conclude, that the constitution of nature is contradicto wisdom, justice, or goodness; which most certainly it is Indeed, there are some particular precepts in Scripture, to particular persons, requiring actions, which would b moral and vicious, were it not for such precepts. But easy to see, that all these are of such a kind, as that the cept changes the whole nature of the case and of th tion; and both constitutes and shows that not to be unju immoral, which, prior to the precept, must have appeared really have been so: which may well be, since none of t precepts are contrary to immutable morality. If it were manded, to cultivate the principles, and act from the spi treachery, ingratitude, cruelty; the command would not the nature of the case, or of the action in any of these in ces. But it is quite otherwise in precepts which require the doing an external action; for instance, taking away property or life of any. For men have no right to eithe or property, but what arises solely from the grant of When this grant is revoked, they cease to have any righ all in either; and when this revocation is made known surely it is possible it may be, it must cease to be unju deprive them of either. And though a course of exte acts, which without command would be immoral, must n an immoral habit, yet a few detached commands have no

natural tendency. I thought proper to say thus much of the few Scripture precepts, which require, not vicious actions, but actions which would have been vicious, had it not been for such precepts; because they are sometimes weakly urged as immoral, and great weight is laid upon objections drawn from them. But to me there seems no difficulty at all in these precepts, but what arises from their being offences; *i. e.* from their being liable to be perverted, as indeed they are, by wicked designing men, to serve the most horrid purposes, and perhaps, to mislead the weak and enthusiastic. And objections from this head are not objections against revelation, but against the whole notion of religion, as a trial; and against the general constitution of nature. *Secondly*, Reason is able to judge, and must, of the evidence of revelation, and of the objections urged against that evidence; which shall be the subject of a following chapter.*

But the consequence of the foregoing observations is, that the question upon which the truth of Christianity depends, is scarce at all, what objections there are against its scheme, since there are none against the morality of it; but *what objections there are against its evidence:* or, *what proof there remains of it, after due allowances made for the objections against that proof.* Because it has been shown, that the *objections against Christianity, as distinguished from objections against its evidence, are frivolous.* For surely very little weight, if any at all, is to be laid upon a way of arguing and objecting, which, when applied to the general constitution of nature, experience shows not to be conclusive: and such, I think, is the whole way of objecting treated of throughout this chapter. It is resolvable into principles, and goes upon suppositions, which mislead us to think, that the Author of nature would not act, as we experience he does; or would act, in such and such cases, as we experience he does not in like cases. But the unreasonableness of this way of objecting will appear yet more evidently from hence, that the chief things thus objected against, are justified, as shall be farther shown,† by distinct, particular, and full analogies, in the constitution and course of nature.

But it is to be remembered, that as frivolous as objections of the foregoing sort against revelation are, yet, when a supposed revelation is more consistent with itself, and has a

* Chap. 7. † Chap. 4, latter part; and 5, 6.

more general and uniform tendency to promote virtue, all circumstances considered, could have been expecte enthusiam and political views; this is a presumptive p its not proceeding from them, and so of its truth; be we are competent judges, what might have been ex from enthusiasm and political views.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Christianity, considered as a Scheme or Constitution, imperfectly comprehended.

It hath been now shown,* that the analogy of nature renders it highly credible beforehand, that, supposing a revelation to be made, it must contain many things very different from what we should have expected, and such as appear open to great objections; and that this observation, in good measure, takes off the force of those objections, or rather precludes them. But it may be alleged, that this is a very partial answer to such objections, or a very unsatisfactory way of obviating them: because it doth not show at all, that the things objected against can be wise, just, and good; much less, that it is credible they are so. It will therefore be proper to show this distinctly, by applying to these objections against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of Christianity, the answer above† given to the like objections against the constitution of nature; before we consider the particular analogies in the latter, to the particular things objected against in the former. Now, that which affords a sufficient answer to objections against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of the constitution of nature, is its being a constitution, a system or scheme, imperfectly comprehended; a scheme, in which means are made use of to accomplish ends; and which is carried on by general laws. For, from these things it has been proved, not only to be possible, but also to be credible, that those things which are objected against, may be consistent with wisdom, justice, and goodness; nay, may be instances of them: and even that the constitution and government of nature may be perfect in the highest possible degree. If Christianity, then, be a scheme, and of the like kind, it is evident, the like objections against it must admit of the like answer. And,

* In the foregoing Chapter.
† Part i. Chap. 7, to which this all along refers.

I. Christianity is a scheme, quite beyond our compr sion. The moral government of God is exercised, by g ally conducting things so in the course of his providence every one, at length, and upon the whole, shall receive ac ing to his deserts; and neither fraud nor violence, but and right, shall finally prevail. Christianity is a part scheme under this general plan of providence, and a part conducive to its completion, with regard to mankind; co ing itself also of various parts, and a mysterious econ which has been carrying on from the time the world into its present wretched state, and is still carrying on, recovery, by a divine person, the Messiah; 'who is to g together in one, the children of God that are scattered abr and establish 'an everlasting kingdom, wherein dw righteousness.'† And in order to it, after various mani tions of things, relating to this great and general sche Providence, through a succession of many ages;—('fo Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, testified be hand his sufferings, and the glory that should follow: whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but un they did minister the things which are now reported unto them that have preached the gospel; which things the a desire to look into:'‡)—after various dispensations, lo forward and preparatory to this final salvation, 'In the fu of time,' when infinite wisdom thought fit, He, 'being i form of God, made himself of no reputation, and took himself the form of a servant, and was made in th lik of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he hum himself, and became obedient to death, even the death c cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, given him a name which is above every name; that a name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in he and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, t glory of God the Father.'§ Parts likewise of this econ are the miraculous mission of the Holy Ghost, and his nary assistances given to good men; the invisible govern which Christ at present exercises over his Church; that w he himself refers to in these words,‖ 'In my father's h are many mansions—I go to prepare a place for you;' his future return to 'judge the world in righteousness,

* John xi. 52.
† 2 Pet. iii. 13.
‡ 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.
§ Phil. ii.
‖ John xiv. 2.

completely re-establish the kingdom of God. 'For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth.† And he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.'‡ Now little, surely, need be said to show, that this system, or scheme of things, is but imperfectly comprehended by us. The Scripture expressly asserts it to be so. And, indeed, one cannot read a passage relating to this 'great mystery of godliness,'§ but what immediately runs up into something which shows us our ignorance in it; as every thing in nature shows us our ignorance in the constitution of nature. And whoever will seriously consider that part of the Christian scheme which is revealed in Scripture, will find so much more unrevealed, as will convince him, that, to all the purposes of judging and objecting, we know as little of it, as of the constitution of nature. Our ignorance, therefore, is as much an answer to our objections against the perfection of one, as against the perfection of the other.

II. It is obvious, too, that in the Christian dispensation, as much as in the natural scheme of things, means are made use of to accomplish ends. And the observation of this furnishes us with the same answers to objections against the perfection of Christianity, as to objections of the like kind against the constitution of nature. It shows the credibility, that the things objected against, how *foolish*¶ soever they appear to men, may be the very best means of accomplishing the very best ends. And their appearing *foolishness* is no presumption against this, in a scheme so greatly beyond our comprehension.

III. The credibility, that the Christian dispensation may have been, all along, carried on by general laws, no less than the course of nature, may require to be more distinctly made out. Consider, then, upon what ground it is we say, that the

* John v. 22, 23. † Matt. xxviii. 18. ‡ 1 Cor. xv.
§ 1 Tim. iii. 16. ¶ 1 Cor. i. 18, &c.

whole common course of nature is carried on according eral fore-ordained laws. We know, indeed, several of th eral laws of matter; and a great part of the natural beh of living agents is reducible to general laws. But we kn a manner, nothing, by what laws, storms, and tempests, quakes, famine, pestilence, become the instruments of d tion to mankind. And the laws by which persons bo the world at such a time and place, are of such capaciti niuses, tempers; the laws, by which thoughts come i mind, in a multitude of cases; and by which innum things happen, of the greatest influence upon the affa state of the world: these laws are so wholly unknown that we call the events, which come to pass by them dental; though all reasonable men know certainly, tha cannot, in reality, be any such thing as chance; and co that the things which have this appearance, are the re general laws, and may be reduced into them. It is th an exceeding little way, and in but a very few respect we can trace up the natural course of things before general laws. And it is only from analogy that we co the whole of it to be capable of being reduced into only from our seeing, that part is so. It is from our f that the course of nature, in some respects and so far, g by general laws, that we conclude this of the rest. that be a just ground for such a conclusion, it is a just also, if not to conclude, yet to comprehend, to render it s able and credible, which is sufficient for answering obje that God's miraculous interpositions may have been, all in like manner, by *general* laws of wisdom. Thus, tha culous powers should be exerted at such times, upon occasions, in such degrees and manners, and with reg such persons, rather than others; that the affairs world, being permitted to go on in their natural course should, just at such a point, have a new direction given by miraculous interpositions; that these interpositions be exactly in such degrees and respects only: all this have been by general laws. These laws are unk indeed, to us; but no more unknown, than the laws whence it is, that some die as soon as they are bor others live to extreme old age; that one man is so supe another in understanding; with innumerable more t which, as was before observed, we cannot reduce to an or rules at all though it is taken for granted, they much reducible to general ones as gravitation. Now,

revealed dispensations of Providence, and miraculous interpositions, be by general laws, as well as God's ordinary government in the course of nature, made known by reason and experience; there is no more reason to expect that every exigence, as it arises, should be provided for by these general laws of miraculous interposition, than that every exigence in nature should, by the general laws of nature: yet there might be wise and good reasons, that miraculous interpositions should be by general laws; and that these laws should not be broken in upon, or deviated from, by other miracles.

Upon the whole, then, the appearances of deficiencies and irregularities in nature, is owing to its being a scheme but in part made known and of such a certain particular kind in other respects. Now we see no more reason, why the frame and course of nature should be such a scheme, than why Christianity should. And that the former is such a scheme, renders it credible, that the latter, upon supposition of its truth, may be so too. And as it is manifest, that Christianity is a scheme revealed but in part, and a scheme in which means are made use of to accomplish ends, like to that of nature; so the credibility that it may have been all along carried on by general laws no less than the course of nature, has been distinctly proved. And from all this it is beforehand credible, that there might, I think probable that there would, be the like appearance of deficiencies and irregularities in Christianity as in nature; *i. e.* that Christianity would be liable to the like objections, as the frame of nature. And these objections are answered by these observations concerning Christianity; as the like objections against the frame of nature, are answered by the like observations concerning the frame of nature.

The objections against Christianity, considered as a matter of fact, having, in general, been obviated in the preceding chapter: and the same, considered as made against the wisdom and goodness of it, having been obviated in this; the next thing, according to the method proposed, is to show, that the principal objections in particular, against Christianity, may be answered by particular and full analogies in nature. And as one of them is made against the whole scheme of it

together, as just now described, I choose to consider it here, rather than in a distinct chapter by itself. The thing objected against this scheme of the gospel is, 'That it seems to suppose God was reduced to the necessity of a long series of intricate means, in order to accomplish his ends, the recovery and salvation of the world; in like sort as men, for want of understanding, or power, not being able to come at their ends directly, are forced to go round about ways, and make use of many perplexed contrivances to arrive at them.' Now, every thing which we see shows the folly of this, considered as an objection against the truth of Christianity. For, according to our manner of conception, God makes use of variety of means, what we often think tedious ones, in the natural course of providence, for the accomplishment of all his ends Indeed, it is certain, there is somewhat in this matter quite beyond our comprehension; but the mystery is as great in nature as in Christianity. We know what we ourselves aim at, as final ends; and what courses we take, merely as means conducing to those ends. But we are greatly ignorant, how far things are considered by the Author of nature, under the single notion of means and ends; so as that it may be said, this is merely an end, and that merely means, in his regard. And whether there be not some peculiar absurdity in our very manner of conception concerning this matter somewhat contradictory, arising from our extremely imperfect views of things, it is impossible to say. However, thus much is manifest, that the whole natural world and government of it is a scheme, or system; not a fixed, but a progressive one: a scheme, in which the operation of various means takes up a great length of time, before the ends they tend to can be attained. The change of seasons, the ripening of the fruits of the earth, the very history of a flower, is an instance of this; and so is human life. Thus, vegetable bodies, and those of animals, though possibly formed at once, yet grow up by degrees to a mature state. And thus rational agents, who animate these latter bodies, are naturally directed to form, each his own manners and character, by the gradual gaining of knowledge and experience, and by a long course of action. Our existence is not only successive, as it must be of necessity, but one state of our life and being is appointed by God to be a preparation for another; and that, to be the means of attaining to another succeeding one: Infancy to childhood; childhood to youth; youth to mature age. Men are impatient, and for precipitating things: but the Author of nature

's deliberate throughout his operations; accomplishing tural ends by slow successive steps. And there is a f things beforehand laid out, which, from the nature of iires various systems of means, as well as length of n order to the carrying on its several parts into execu- Thus, in the daily course of natural providence, God es in the very same manner as in the dispensation of ianity: making one thing subservient to another; this, iewhat farther; and so on, through a progressive series ins, which extend, both backward and forward, beyond most view. Of this manner of operation, every thing in the course of nature is as much an instance, as any the Christian dispensation.

CHAPTER V.

Of the particular System of Christianity; the Appointment of a Mediator, and the Redemption of the World by him.

THERE is not, I think, any thing relating to Christianity, which has been more objected against, than the mediation of Christ, in some or other of its parts. Yet, upon thorough consideration, there seems nothing less justly liable to it. For,

I. The whole analogy of nature removes all imagined presumption against the general notion of 'a Mediator between God and man.'* For we find, all living creatures are brought into the world, and their life in infancy is preserved, by the instrumentality of others; and every satisfaction of it, some way or other, is bestowed by the like means. So that the visible government, which God exercises over the world, is by the instrumentality and mediation of others. And how far his invisible government be or be not so, it is impossible to determine at all by reason. And the supposition, that part of it is so, appears, to say the least, altogether as credible as the contrary. There is then no sort of objection, from the light of nature, against the general notion of a mediator between God and man, considered as a doctrine of Christianity, or as an appointment in this dispensation; since we find, by experience, that God does appoint mediators, to be the instruments of good and evil to us, the instruments of his justice and his mercy. And the objection here referred to is urged, not against mediation in that high, eminent, and peculiar sense, in which Christ is our mediator; but absolutely against the whole notion itself of a mediator at all.

II. As we must suppose, that the world is under the

* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

proper moral government of God, or in a state of religion, before we can enter into consideration of the revealed doctrine concerning the redemption of it by Christ; so that supposition is here to be distinctly taken notice of. Now, the divine moral government which religion teaches us, implies, that the consequence of vice shall be misery, in some future state, by the righteous judgment of God. That such consequent punishment shall take effect by his appointment, is necessarily implied. But, as it is not in any sort to be supposed, that we are made acquainted with all the ends or reasons for which it is fit future punishment should be inflicted, or why God has appointed such and such consequent misery should follow vice; and as we are altogether in the dark, how or in what manner it shall follow, by what immediate occasions, or by the instrumentality of what means; there is no absurdity in supposing, it may follow in a way analogous to that in which many miseries follow such and such courses of action at present; poverty, sickness, infamy, untimely death by diseases, death from the hands of civil justice. There is no absurdity in supposing future punishment may follow wickedness of course, as we speak, or in the way of natural consequences, from God's original constitution of the world; from the nature he has given us, and from the condition in which he places us: or, in like manner, as a person rashly trifling upon a precipice, in the way of natural consequence, falls down; in the way of natural consequence, breaks his limbs, suppose; in the way of natural consequence of this, without help, perishes.

Some good men may, perhaps, be offended, with hearing it spoken of as a supposable thing, that the future punishments of wickedness may be in the way of natural consequence; as if this were taking the execution of justice out of the hands of God, and giving it to nature. But they should remember that when things come to pass according to the course of nature, this does not hinder them from being his doing, who is the God of nature; and that the Scripture ascribes those punishments to divine justice, which are known to be natural; and which must be called so, when distinguished from such as are miraculous. But, after all, this supposition, or rather this way of speaking, is here made use of only by way of illustration of the subject before us. For, since it must be admitted, that the future punishment of wickedness is not a matter of arbitrary appointment, but of reason, equity, and justice; it comes, for aught I see, to the

same thing, whether it is supposed to be inflicted in a way analogous to that in which the temporal punishments of vice and folly are inflicted, or in any other way. And though there were a difference, it is allowable in the present case to make this supposition, plainly not an incredible one, That future punishment may follow wickedness in the way of natural consequence, or according to some general laws of government already established in the universe.

III. Upon this supposition, or even without it, we may observe somewhat, much to the present purpose, in the constitution of nature, or appointments of Providence: the provision which is made, that all the bad natural consequences of men's actions should not always actually follow; or, that such bad consequences, as, according to the settled course of things, would inevitably have followed, if not prevented, should, in certain degrees, be prevented. We are apt, presumptuously, to imagine, that the world might have been so constituted, as that there would not have been any such *thing* as misery or evil. On the contrary, we find the Author of nature permits it. But then, he has provided reliefs, and, in many cases, perfect remedies for it, after some pains and difficulties; reliefs and remedies even for that evil, which is the fruit of our own misconduct, and which, in the course of nature, would have continued, and ended in our destruction, but for such remedies. And this is an instance both of severity and of indulgence, in the constitution of nature. Thus, all the bad consequences, now mentioned, of a man's trifling upon a precipice, might be prevented. And, though all were not, yet some of them might, by proper interposition, if not rejected; by another's coming to the rash man's relief, with his own laying hold on that relief, in such sort as the case requires. Persons may do a great deal themselves towards preventing the bad consequences of their follies; and more may be done by themselves, together with the assistance of others, their fellow-creatures; which assistance nature requires and prompts us to. This is the general constitution of the world. Now, suppose it had been so constituted, that after such actions were done, as were foreseen naturally to draw after them misery to the doer, it should have been no more in human power to have prevented that naturally consequent misery, in any instance, than it is, in all; no one can say, whether such a more severe constitution of things might not yet have been really good. But that, on the contrary, provision is made by nature, that we may and do, to so great

degree, prevent the bad natural effects of our follies; this may be called mercy, or compassion, in the original constitution of the world; compassion, as distinguished from goodness in general. And, the whole known constitution and course of things affording us instances of such compassion, it would be according to the analogy of nature to hope, that, however ruinous the natural consequences of vice might be, from the general laws of God's government over the universe, yet provision might be made, possibly might have been originally made, for preventing those ruinous consequences from inevitably following; at least from following universally, and in all cases.

Many, I am sensible, will wonder at finding this made a question, or spoken of as in any degree doubtful. The generality of mankind are so far from having that awful sense of things, which the present state of vice and misery and darkness seems to make but reasonable, that they have scarce any apprehension, or thought at all, about this matter, any way; and some serious persons may have spoken unadvisedly concerning it. But let us observe, what we experience to be, and what, from the very constitution of nature, cannot but be, the consequences of irregular and disorderly behaviour; even of such rashness, wilfulness, neglects, as we scarce call vicious. Now, it is natural to apprehend, that the bad consequences of irregularity will be greater, in proportion as the irregularity is so. And there is no comparison between these irregularities, and the greater instances of vice, or a dissolute profligate disregard to all religion; if there be any thing at all in religion. For, consider what it is for creatures, moral agents, presumptuously to introduce that confusion and misery into the kingdom of God, which mankind have, in fact, introduced; to blaspheme the sovereign Lord of all; to contemn his authority; to be injurious to the degree they are, to their fellow-creatures, the creatures of God. Add, that the effects of vice, in the present world, are often extreme misery, irretrievable ruin, and even death: and, upon putting all this together, it will appear, that as no one can say, in what degree fatal the unprevented consequences of vice may be, according to the general rule of divine government; so it is by no means intuitively certain, how far these consequences could possibly, in the nature of the thing, be prevented, consistently with the eternal rule of right, or with what is, in fact, the moral constitution of nature. However, there would be large ground to hope, that the universal government was not so severely strict, but that there

was room for pardon, or for having those penal consequences prevented. Yet,

IV. There seems no probability, that any thing we could do, would alone, and of itself, prevent them; prevent their following, or being inflicted. But one would think, at least, it were impossible that the contrary should be thought certain For we are not acquainted with the whole of the case. We are not informed of all the reasons, which render it fit that future punishments should be inflicted; and, therefore, cannot know, whether any thing we could do would make such an alteration, as to render it fit that they should be remitted. We do not know, what the whole natural or appointed consequences of vice are, nor in what way they would follow, if not prevented; and, therefore, can in no sort say, whether we could do any thing, which would be sufficient to prevent them Our ignorance being thus manifest, let us recollect the analogy of nature, or providence. For though this may be but a slight ground to raise a positive opinion upon in this matter, yet it is sufficient to answer a mere arbitrary assertion, without any kind of evidence, urged by way of objection against a doctrine, the proof of which is not reason, but revelation. Consider, then, people ruin their fortunes by extravagance; they bring diseases upon themselves by excess; they incur the penalties of civil laws, and surely civil government is natural: will sorrow for these follies past, and behaving well for the future, alone and of itself, prevent the natural consequences of them? On the contrary, men's natural abilities of helping themselves are often impaired; or, if not, yet they are forced to be beholden to the assistance of others, upon several accounts, and in different ways: assistance which they would have had no occasion for, had it not been for their misconduct; but which, in the disadvantageous condition they have reduced themselves to, is absolutely necessary to their recovery, and retrieving their affairs. Now, since this is our case, considering ourselves merely as inhabitants of this world, and as having a temporal interest here, under the natural government of God, which, however, has a great deal moral in it; why is it not supposable, that this may be our case also in our more important capacity, as under his perfect moral government and having a more general and future interest depending? If we have misbehaved in this higher capacity, and rendered ourselves obnoxious to the future punishment which God has annexed to vice; it is plainly credible, that behaving well for

the time to come, may be—not useless, God forbid—but wholly insufficient, alone and of itself, to prevent that punishment; or to put us in the condition which we should have been in, had we preserved our innocence.

And though we ought to reason with all reverence, whenever we reason concerning the divine conduct, yet it may be added, that it is clearly contrary to all our notions of government, as well as to what is, in fact, the general constitution of nature, to suppose that doing well for the future, should in all cases, prevent all the judicial bad consequences of having done evil, or all the punishment annexed to disobedience. And we have manifestly nothing from whence to determine, in what degree, and in what cases, reformation would prevent this punishment, even supposing that it would in some. And, though the efficacy of repentance itself alone, to prevent what mankind had rendered themselves obnoxious to, and recover what they had forfeited, is now insisted upon in opposition to Christianity; yet, by the general prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices over the heathen world, this notion, of repentance alone being sufficient to expiate guilt, appears to be contrary to the general sense of mankind.

Upon the whole, then, had the laws, the general laws of God's government, been permitted to operate, without any interposition in our behalf, the future punishment, for aught we know to the contrary, or have any reason to think, must inevitably have followed, notwithstanding any thing we could have done to prevent it. Now,

V. In this darkness, or this light of nature, call it which you please, revelation comes in; confirms every doubting fear, which could enter into the heart of man, concerning the future unprevented consequence of wickedness; supposes the world to be in a state of ruin, (a supposition which seems the very ground of the Christian dispensation, and which, if not proveable by reason, yet it is in no wise contrary to it;) teaches us, too, that the rules of divine government are such, as not to admit of pardon immediately and directly upon repentance, or by the sole efficacy of it; but then teaches, at the same time, what nature might justly have hoped, that the moral government of the universe was not so rigid, but that there was room for an interposition to avert the fatal consequences of vice; which therefore, by this means, does admit of pardon. Revelation teaches us, that the unknown laws of God's more general government, no less than the particular laws by which we

experience he governs us at present, are compassionate,* as well as good, in the more general notion of goodness; and that he hath mercifully provided, that there should be an interposition to prevent the destruction of human kind, whatever that destruction unprevented would have been. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth,' not, to be sure, in a speculative, but in a practical sense, 'that whosoever believeth in him should not perish;'† gave his son in the same way of goodness to the world, as he affords particular persons the friendly assistance of their fellow-creatures, when, without it, their temporal ruin would be the certain consequence of their follies; in the same way of goodness, I say, though in a transcendent and infinitely higher degree. And the Son of God 'loved us, and have himself for us,' with a love which he himself compares to that of human friendship; though, in this case, all comparisons must fall infinitely short of the thing intended to be illustrated by them. He interposed in such a manner, as was necessary and effectual to prevent that execution of justice upon sinners, which God had appointed should otherwise have been executed upon them; or in such a manner, as to prevent that punishment from actually following, which, according to the general laws of divine government, must have followed the sins of the world, had it not been for such interposition.‡

If any thing here said should appear, upon first thought, inconsistent with divine goodness, a second, I am persuaded,

* Page 128, &c. † John iii. 16.

‡ It cannot, I suppose, be imagined, even by the most cursory reader, that it is, in any sort, affirmed, or implied, in any thing said in this chapter, that none can have the benefit of the general redemption, but such as have the advantage of being made acquainted with it in the present life.—But, it may be needful to mention, that several questions, which have been brought into the subject before us, and determined, are not in the least entered into here; questions which have been, I fear, rashly determined, and, perhaps, with equal rashness, contrary ways. For instance: Whether God could have saved the world by other means than the death of Christ, consistently with the general laws of his government? And, had not Christ came into the world, what would have been the future condition of the better sort of men; those just persons over the face of the earth, for whom Manasses in his prayer asserts, repentance was not appointed? The meaning of the first of these questions is greatly ambiguous; and neither of them can properly be answered, without going upon that infinitely absurd supposition, that we know the whole of the case. And, perhaps, the very inquiry, *what would have followed if God had not done as he has?* may have in it some very great impropriety; and ought not to be carried on any farther than is necessary to help our partial and inadequate conceptions of things.

will entirely remove that appearance. For, were we to suppose the constitution of things to be such, as that the whole creation must have perished, had it not been for somewhat, which God had appointed should be in order to prevent that ruin; even this supposition would not be inconsistent, in any degree, with the most absolutely perfect goodness. But still it may be thought, that this whole manner of treating the subject before us, supposes mankind to be naturally in a very strange state. And truly so it does. But it is not Christianity which has put us into this state. Whoever will consider the manifold miseries, and the extreme wickedness of the world; that the best have great wrongnesses with themselves, which they complain of, and endeavour to amend; but, that the generality grow more profligate and corrupt with age: that heathen moralists thought the present state to be a state of punishment; and, what might be added, that the earth, our habitation, has the appearance of being a ruin: whoever, I say, will consider all these, and some other obvious things, will think he has little reason to object against the Scripture account, that mankind is in a state of degradation; against this being the fact: how difficult soever he may think it to account for, or even to form a distinct conception of, the occasions and circumstances of it. But that the crime of our first parents was the occasion of our being placed in a more disadvantageous condition, is a thing throughout, and particularly analogous to what we see, in the daily course of natural Providence; as the recovery of the world, by the interposition of Christ, has been shown to be so in general.

VI. The particular manner in which Christ interposed in the redemption of the world, or his office as Mediator, in the largest sense, *between God and man*, is thus represented to us in the Scripture: 'He is the light of the world;'* the revealer of the will of God in the most eminent sense: He is a propitiatory sacrifice;† 'the Lamb of God;'‡ and as he voluntarily offered himself up, he is styled our High-Priest.§ And, which seems of peculiar weight, he is described before-hand in the Old Testament, under the same characters of a priest, and expiatory victim.‖ And whereas it is objected,

* John i. and viii. 12.

† Rom. iii. 25, and v. 11. 1 Cor. v. 7. Eph. v. 2. 1 John ii. 2. Matt. xxvi. 28.

‡ John i. 29, 36, and throughout the book of Revelation.

§ Throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews.

‖ Isa. liii. Dan. ix. 24. Psalm cx. 4.

that all this is merely by way of allusion to the sacrific the Mosaic law, the apostle, on the contrary, affirms, tha 'law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the image of the things;'* and that the priests that offer according to the law—serve unto the example and sh of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, he was about to make the tabernacle. 'For see,' sait 'that thou make all things according to the pattern sh to thee in the mount:'† *i. e.* the Levitical priesthood v shadow of the priesthood of Christ, in like manner as th bernacle made by Moses was according to that showed in the Mount. The priesthood of Christ and the taber in the Mount, were the originals: of the former of which Levitical priesthood was a type; and of the latter, the t nacle made by Moses was a copy. The doctrine of epistle, then, plainly is, that the legal sacrifices were allu to the great and final atonement to be made by the blo Christ; and not that this was an allusion to those. Nor any thing be more express and determinate, than the fol ing passage: 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls a goats should take away sin. Wherefore, when he co into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering,' *i. e.* of and of goats, 'thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou pared me—Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.—By w will we are sanctified, through the offering of the bod Jesus Christ once for all.'‡ And to add one passage of the like kind: 'Christ was once offered to bear the si many; and unto them that look for him shall he appea second time, without sin;' *i. e.* without bearing sin, as h at his first coming, by being an offering for it; wit having our *iniquities* again *laid upon him*, without being more a sin-offering;—'Unto them that look for him sha appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.'§ do the inspired writers at all confine themselves to this ner of speaking concerning the satisfaction of Christ, bu clare an efficacy in what he did and suffered for us, addit to, and beyond mere instruction, example, and governn in a great variety of expression: 'That Jesus should di that nation,' the Jews; 'and not for that nation only, but also,' plainly by the efficacy of his death, 'he should ga together in one the children of God that were scatt

* Heb. x. 1. † Heb. viii. 4, 5. ‡ Heb. x. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10.
§ Heb. ix. 28.

abroad:'* that 'he suffered for sins, the just for the unjust:'† that 'he gave his life, himself, a ransom:'‡ that 'we are bought, bought with a price:'§ that 'he redeemed us with his blood; redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:'‖ that he is our 'advocate, intercessor, and propitiation:'¶ that 'he was made perfect (or consummate) through sufferings; and being thus made perfect, he became the author of salvation:'** that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, by the death of his Son by the cross; not imputing their trespasses unto them:'†† and, lastly, that 'through death he destroyed him that had the power of death.'‡‡ Christ, then, having thus 'humbled himself, and become obedient to death, even the death of the cross, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; hath given all things into his hands; hath committed all judgment unto him; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.'§§ For, 'worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing! And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!'‖‖

These passages of Scripture seem to comprehend and express the chief parts of Christ's office, as mediator between God and man; so far, I mean, as the nature of this his office is revealed, and it is usually treated of by divines under three heads.

First, He was, by the way of eminence, the Prophet: 'that Prophet that should come into the world,'¶¶ to declare the divine will. He published anew the law of nature, which men had corrupted; and the very knowledge of which, to some degree, was lost among them. He taught mankind, taught us authoritatively, to 'live soberly, righteously and godly in

* John xi. 51, 52. † 1 Pet. iii. 18.
‡ Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45. 1 Tim. ii. 6.
§ 2 Pet. ii. 1. Rev. xiv. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 20.
‖ 1 Pet. i. 19. Rev. v. 9. Gal. iii. 13.
¶ Heb. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1, 2.
** Heb. ii. 10, and v. 9.
†† 2 Cor. v. 19. Rom. v. 10. Eph. ii. 16.
‡‡ Heb. ii. 14. See also a remarkable passage in the book of Job, xxxiii. 24.
§§ Phil. ii. 8, 9. John iii. 35, and v. 22, 23.
‖‖ Rev. v. 12, 13. ¶¶ John vi. 14.

this present world,' in expectation of the future judgment of God. He confirmed the truth of this moral system of nature, and gave us additional evidence of it; the evidence of testimony.* He distinctly revealed the manner in which God would be worshipped, the efficacy of repentance, and the rewards and punishments of a future life. Thus he was a prophet in a sense in which no other ever was. To which is to be added, that he set us a perfect 'example, that we should follow his steps.'

Secondly, He has a 'kingdom, which is not of this world.' He founded a church, to be to mankind a standing memorial of religion, and invitation to it; which he promised to be with always, even to the end. He exercises an invisible government over it himself, and by his Spirit; over that part of it which is militant here on earth, a government of discipline, 'for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying his body; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'† Of this church, all persons scattered over the world, who live in obedience to his laws, are members. For these he is 'gone to prepare a place, and will come again to receive them unto himself, that where he is, there they may be also; and reign with him for ever and ever:'‡ and likewise 'to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his gospel.'§

Against these parts of Christ's office, I find no objections but what are fully obviated in the beginning of this Chapter.

Lastly, Christ offered himself a propitiatory sacrifice, and made atonement for the sins of the world: which is mentioned last, in regard to what is objected against it. Sacrifices of expiation were commanded the Jews, and obtained amongst most other nations, from tradition, whose original probably was revelation. And they were continually repeated, both occasionally and at the returns of stated times; and made up great part of the external religion of mankind. 'But now once in the end of the world Christ appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.'‖ And this sacrifice was in the highest degree, and with the most extensive influence, of that efficacy for obtaining pardon of sin, which the heathens may be supposed to have thought their sacrifices to have been, and which

* Page 163, &c. † Eph. iv. 12, 13.
‡ John xiv. 2, 3. Rev. iii. 21, and xi. 15.
§ 2 Thess. i. 8. ‖ Heb. ix. 26.

the Jewish sacrifices really were in some degree, and with regard to some persons.

How, and in what particular way, it had this efficacy, there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain; but I do not find that the Scripture has explained it. We seem to be very much in the dark concerning the manner in which the ancients understood atonement to be made, *i. e.* pardon to be obtained, by sacrifices. And if the Scripture has, as surely it has, left this matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious, left somewhat in it unrevealed, all conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least uncertain. Nor has any one reason to complain for want of farther information, unless he can show his claim to it.

Some have endeavoured to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us, beyond what the Scripture has authorized; others, probably because they could not explain it, have been for taking it away, and confining his office as Redeemer of the world, to his instruction, example, and government of the church; whereas the doctrine of the gospel appears to be, not only that he taught the efficacy of repentance, but rendered it of the efficacy which it is, by what he did and suffered for us: that he obtained for us the benefit of having our repentance accepted unto eternal life: not only that he revealed to sinners, that they were in a capacity of salvation, and how they might obtain it; but, moreover, that he put them into this capacity of salvation, by what he did and suffered for them; put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment, and obtaining future happiness. And it is our wisdom thankfully to accept the benefit, by performing the conditions upon which it is offered, on our part, without disputing how it was procured on his. For,

VII. Since we neither know by what means punishment in a future state would have followed wickedness in this; nor in what manner it would have been inflicted, had it not been prevented; nor all the reasons why its infliction would have been needful; nor the particular nature of that state of happiness which Christ has gone to prepare for his disciples; and since we are ignorant how far any thing which we could do, would, alone and of itself, have been effectual to prevent that punishment to which we are obnoxious, and recover that happiness which we had forfeited; it is most evident we are not judges, antecedently to revelation, whether a mediator was or was not necessary to obtain those ends; to prevent that future punishment, and bring mankind to the final hap

piness of their nature. And for the very same reaso
supposition of the necessity of a mediator, we are
judges, antecedently to revelation, of the whole natu
office, or the several parts of which it consists; of w
fit and requisite to be assigned him, in order to accom
ends of divine Providence in the appointment. A
hence it follows, that to object against the expedienc
fulness of particular things revealed to have been
suffered by him, because we do not see how th
conducive to those ends, is highly absurd. Yet n
more common to be met with, than this absurdity.
be acknowledged beforehand, that we are not judge
case, it is evident that no objection can, with any sh
reason, be urged against any particular part of Chris
atorial office revealed in Scripture, till it can be sho
tively, not to be requisite, or conducive, to the ends
to be accomplished; or that it is in itself unreasonabl

And there is one objection made against the satisfa
Christ, which looks to be of this positive kind; that
trine of his being appointed to suffer for the sins of th
represents God as being indifferent whether he punis
innocent or the guilty. Now, from the foregoing
tions, we may see the extreme slightness of all such
tions; and, (though it is most certain all who make
not see the consequence,) that they conclude altoge
much against God's whole original constitution of
and the whole daily course of divine Providence, in
vernment of the world, *i. e.* against the whole sch
theism and the whole notion of religion, as against Chri
For the world is a constitution, or system, whose pa
a mutual reference to each other; and there is a sc
things gradually carrying on, called the course of na
the carrying on of which God has appointed us, in
ways, to contribute. And when, in the daily co
natural providence, it is appointed that innocent people
suffer for the faults of the guilty, this is liable to th
same objection as the instance we are now considerin
infinitely greater importance of that appointment of
tianity which is objected against, does not hinder but
be, as it plainly is, an appointment of the very san
with what the world affords us daily examples of.
there were any force at all in the objection, it w
stronger, in one respect, against natural providenc
against Christianity; because, under the former, we

many cases commanded, and even necessitated, whether we will or no, to suffer for the faults of others; whereas the sufferings of Christ were voluntary. The world's being under the righteous government of God, does indeed imply, that finally, and upon the whole, every one shall receive according to his personal deserts; and the general doctrine of the whole Scripture is, that this shall be the completion of the divine government. But, during the progress, and, for ought we know, even in order to the completion of this moral scheme, vicarious punishments may be fit, and absolutely necessary. Men, by their follies, run themselves into extreme distress; into difficulties which would be absolutely fatal to them, were it not for the interposition and assistance of others. God commands by the law of nature, that we afford them this assistance, in many cases where we cannot do it without very great pains, and labour, and sufferings to ourselves. And we see in what variety of ways one person's sufferings contribute to the relief of another; and how, or by what particular means, this comes to pass, or follows, from the constitution and laws of nature, which come under our notice; and being familiarized to it, men are not shocked with it. So that the reason of their insisting upon objections of the foregoing kind, against the satisfaction of Christ, is, either that they do not consider God's settled and uniform appointment as his appointment at all, or else they forget that vicarious punishment is a providential appointment of every day's experience: and then, from their being unacquainted with the more general laws of nature, or divine government over the world, and not seeing how the sufferings of Christ could contribute to the redemption of it, unless by arbitrary and tyrannical will, they conclude his sufferings could not contribute to it any other way. And yet, what has been often alleged in justification of this doctrine, even from the apparent natural tendency of this method of our redemption—its tendency to vindicate the authority of God's laws, and deter his creatures from sin: this has never yet been answered, and is, I think, plainly unanswerable: though I am far from thinking it an account of the whole of the case. But without taking this into consideration, it abundantly appears, from the observations above made, that this objection is, not an objection against Christianity, but against the whole general constitution of nature. And if it were to be considered as an objection against Christianity, or considering it as it is, an objection against the constitution of nature, it amounts

to no more in conclusion than this, that a divine appoint cannot be necessary, or expedient, because the objector not discern it to be so; though he must own that the n of the case is such, as renders him incapable of judging ther it be so or not; or of seeing it to be necessary, thou were so.

It is indeed a matter of great patience to reasonable to find people arguing in this manner; objecting agains credibility of such particular things revealed in Scripture, they do not see the necessity or expediency of them. though it is highly right, and the most pious exercise of understanding, to inquire with due reverence into the and reasons of God's dispensations; yet, when those rea are concealed, to argue from our ignorance, that such pensations cannot be from God, is infinitely absurd. presumption of this kind of objections seems almost lo the folly of them. And the folly of them is yet greater, w they are urged, as usually they are, against things in C tianity analogous, or like to those natural dispensatio Providence, which are matter of experience. Let reaso kept to; and, if any part of the Scripture account of th demption of the world by Christ can be shown to be really trary to it, let the Scripture, in the name of God, be given but let not such poor creatures as we, go on objecting again infinite scheme, that we do not see the necessity or useful of all its parts, and call this reasoning; and, which still ther heightens the absurdity in the present case, parts w we are not actively concerned in. For, it may be worth r tioning,

Lastly, That not only the reason of the thing, but the w analogy of nature, should teach us, not to expect to have like information concerning the divine conduct, as concer our own duty. God instructs us by experience, (for not reason, but experience, which instructs us,) what g or bad consequences will follow from our acting in s and such manners; and by this he directs us how we to behave ourselves. But, though we are sufficiently structed for the common purposes of life, yet it is bu almost infinitely small part of natural providence which are at all let into. The case is the same with regar revelation. The doctrine of a mediator between God man, against which it is objected, that the expedienc some things in it is not understood, relates only to what done on God's part in the appointment, and on the Mediat

in the execution of it. For what is required of us, in consequence of this gracious dispensation, is another subject, in which none can complain for want of information. The constitution of the world, and God's natural government over it, is all mystery, as much as the Christian dispensation. Yet under the first, he has given men all things pertaining to life; and under the other, all things pertaining unto godliness. And it may be added, that there is nothing hard to be accounted for in any of the common precepts of Christianity; though, if there were, surely a divine command is abundantly sufficient to lay us under the strongest obligations to obedience. But the fact is, that the reasons of all the Christian precepts are evident. Positive institutions are manifestly necessary to keep up and propagate religion among mankind. And our duty to Christ, the internal and external worship of him; this part of the religion of the gospel manifestly arises out of what he has done and suffered, his authority and dominion, and the relation which he is revealed to stand in to us.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the want of Universality in Revelation; and of the posed Deficiency in the Proof of it.

It has been thought by some persons, that if the evide of revelation appears doubtful, this itself turns into a posi argument against it; because it cannot be supposed, tha it were true, it would be left to subsist upon doubtful evide And the objection against revelation, from its not being versal, is often insisted upon as of great weight.

Now, the weakness of these opinions may be shown observing the suppositions on which they are founded, wi are really such as these;—that it cannot be thought would have bestowed any favour at all upon us, unless in degree which, we think, he might, and which, we imag would be most to our particular advantage; and also, tha cannot be thought he would bestow a favour upon any, un he bestowed the same upon all: suppositions which we contradicted, not by a few instances in God's natural gov ment of the world, but by the general analogy of nat together.

Persons who speak of the evidence of religion as doubt and of this supposed doubtfulness as a positive argum against it, should be put upon considering, what that evide indeed is, which they act upon with regard to their tem ral interests. For, it is not only extremely difficult, but, many cases, absolutely impossible, to balance pleasure a pain, satisfaction and uneasiness, so as to be able to say, which side the overplus is. There are the like difficulties a impossibilities, in making the due allowances for a change temper and taste, for satiety, disgusts, ill health; any of wh render men incapable of enjoying, after they have obtain what they most eagerly desired. Numberless, too, are t accidents, besides that one of untimely death, which u even probably disappoint the best concerted schemes; a

strong objections are often seen to lie against them, not to be removed or answered, but which seem overbalanced by reasons on the other side; so as that the certain difficulties and dangers of the pursuit are, by every one, thought justly disregarded, upon account of there appearing greater advantages in case of success, though there be but little probability of it. *Lastly*, Every one observes our liableness, if we be not upon our guard, to be deceived by the falsehood of men, and the false appearances of things; and this danger must be greatly increased, if there be a strong bias within, suppose from indulged passion, to favour the deceit. Hence arises that great uncertainty and doubtfulness of proof, wherein our temporal interest really consists; what are the most probable means of attaining it; and whether those means will eventually be successful. And numberless instances there are, in the daily course of life, in which all men think it reasonable to engage in pursuits, though the probability is greatly against succeeding; and to make such provision for themselves, as it is supposable they may have occasion for, though the plain acknowledged probability is, that they never shall. Then those who think the objection against revelation, from its light not being universal, to be of weight, should observe, that the Author of nature, in numberless instances, bestows that upon some, which he does not upon others, who seem equally to stand in need of it. Indeed, he appears to bestow all his gifts with the most promiscuous variety, among creatures of the same species: health and strength, capacities of prudence and of knowledge, means of improvement, riches, and all external advantages. And as there are not any two men found of exactly like shape and features, so, it is probable, there are not any two of an exactly like constitution, temper, and situation, with regard to the goods and evils of life. Yet, notwithstanding these uncertainties and varieties, God does exercise a natural government over the world; and there is such a thing as a prudent and imprudent institution of life, with regard to our health and our affairs, under that his natural government.

As neither the Jewish nor Christian revelation have been universal, and as they have been afforded to a greater or less part of the world, at different times, so, likewise, at different times, both revelations have had different degrees of evidence. The Jews who lived during the succession of prophets, that is, from Moses till after the Captivity, had higher evidence of the truth of their religion, than those had who lived in the interval between the last-mentioned period and the coming of

Christ. And the first Christians had higher evidence of the miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity than what we have now. They had also a strong presumptive proof of the truth of it, perhaps of much greater force, in way of argument, than many may think, of which we have very little remaining; I mean, the presumptive proof of its truth from the influence which it had upon the lives of the generality of its professors. And we, or future ages, may possibly have a proof of it, which they could not have, from the conformity between the prophetic history, and the state of the world, and of Christianity. And farther: If we were to suppose the evidence, which some have of religion, to amount to little more than seeing that it may be true, but that they remain in great doubts and uncertainties about both its evidence and its nature, and great perplexities concerning the rule of life; others to have a full conviction of the truth of religion, with a distinct knowledge of their duty; and others severally to have all the intermediate degrees of religious light and evidence, which *lie* between these two.—If we put the case, that for the present it was intended revelation should be no more than a small light, in the midst of a world greatly overspread, notwithstanding it, with ignorance and darkness; that certain glimmerings of this light should extend, and be directed, to remote distances, in such a manner as that those who really partook of it should not discern from whence it originally came; that some, in a nearer situation to it, should have its light obscured, and, in different ways and degrees, intercepted; and that others should be placed within its clearer influence, and be much more enlivened, cheered, and directed by it; but yet, that even to these it should be no more than 'a light shining in a dark place:' all this would be perfectly uniform and of a piece with the conduct of Providence, in the distribution of its other blessings. If the fact of the case really were, that some have received no light at all from the Scripture; as many ages and countries in the heathen world: that others, though they have, by means of it, had essential or natural religion enforced upon their consciences, yet have never had the genuine Scripture revelation, with its real evidence, proposed to their consideration; and the ancient Persians and modern Mahometans may possibly be instances of people in a situation somewhat like to this: that others, though they have had the Scripture laid before them as of divine revelation, yet have had it with the system and evidence of Christianity so interpolated, the system so corrupted, the evidence

so blended with false miracles, as to leave the mind in the utmost doubtfulness and uncertainty about the whole; which may be the state of some thoughtful men in most of those nations who call themselves Christian: and, *lastly*, that others have had Christianity offered to them in its genuine simplicity, and with its proper evidence, as persons in countries and churches of civil and of Christian liberty; but, however, that even these persons are left in great ignorance in many respects, and have by no means light afforded them enough to satisfy their curiosity, but only to regulate their life, to teach them their duty, and encourage them in the careful discharge of it: I say, if we were to suppose this somewhat of a general true account of the degrees of moral and religious light and evidence, which were intended to be afforded mankind, and of what has actually been and is their situation, in their moral and religious capacity, there would be nothing in all this ignorance, doubtfulness, and uncertainty, in all these varieties and supposed disadvantages of some in comparison of others, respecting religion, but may be paralleled by manifest analogies in the natural dispensations of Providence at present, and considering ourselves merely in our temporal capacity.

Nor is there any thing shocking in all this, or which would seem to bear hard upon the moral administration in nature, if we would really keep in mind, that every one should be dealt equitably with; instead of forgetting this, or explaining it away, after it is acknowledged in words. All shadow of injustice, and indeed all harsh appearances, in this various economy of Providence, would be lost, if we would keep in mind, that every merciful allowance should be made, and no more be required of any one, than what might have been equitably expected of him, from the circumstances in which he was placed; and not what might have been expected, had he been placed in other circumstances: *i. e.* in Scripture language, that every man shall be 'accepted according to what he had, not according to what he had not.'* This, however, doth not by any means imply, that all persons' condition here is equally advantageous with respect to futurity. And Providence's designing to place some in greater darkness with respect to religious knowledge, is no more a reason why they should not endeavour to get out of that darkness, and others to bring them out of it, than why ignorant and slow

* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

people, in matters of other knowledge, should not endeavour to learn, or should not be instructed.

It is not unreasonable to suppose, that the same wise and good principle, whatever it was, which disposed the Author of nature to make different kinds and orders of creatures, disposed him also to place creatures of like kinds in different situations; and that the same principle which disposed him to make creatures of different moral capacities, disposed him also to place creatures of like moral capacities in different religious situations; and even the same creatures, in different periods of their being. And the account or reason of this, is also most probably the account why the constitution of things is such, as that creatures of moral natures or capacities, for a considerable part of that duration in which they are living agents, are not at all subjects of morality and religion; but grow up to be so, and grow up to be so more and more, gradually, from childhood to mature age.

What, in particular, is the account or reason of these things, we must be greatly in the dark, were it only that we know so very little even of our own case. Our present state may possibly be the consequence of somewhat past, which we are wholly ignorant of; as it has a reference to somewhat to come, of which we know scarce any more than is necessary for practice. A system or constitution, in its notion, implies variety; and so complicated a one as this world, very great variety. So that were revelation universal, yet from men's different capacities of understanding, from the different lengths of their lives, their different educations and other external circumstances, and from their difference of temper and bodily constitution, their religious situations would be widely different, and the disadvantage of some in comparison of others, perhaps, altogether as much as at present. And the true account, whatever it be, why mankind, or such a part of mankind, are placed in this condition of ignorance, must be supposed also the true account of our farther ignorance, in not knowing the reasons why, or whence it is, that they are placed in this condition. But the following practical reflections may deserve the serious consideration of those persons, who think the circumstances of mankind, or their own, in the forementioned respects, a ground of complaint.

First, The evidence of religion not appearing obvious, may constitute one particular part of some men's trial in the religious sense; as it gives scope for a virtuous exercise, or vicious neglect, of their understanding, in examining or not

examining into that evidence. There seems no possible reason to be given, why we may not be in a state of moral probation, with regard to the exercise of our understanding upon the subject of religion, as we are with regard to our behaviour in common affairs. The former is as much a thing within our power and choice as the latter. And I suppose it is to be laid down for certain, that the same character, the same inward principle, which, after a man is convinced of the truth of religion, renders him obedient to the precepts of it, would, were he not thus convinced, set him about an examination of it, upon its system and evidence being offered to his thoughts; and that in the latter state, his examination would be with an impartiality, seriousness, and solicitude, proportionable to what his obedience is in the former. And as inattention, negligence, want of all serious concern, about a matter of such a nature and such importance, when offered to men's consideration, is, before a distinct conviction of its truth, as real immoral depravity and dissoluteness, as neglect of religious practice after such conviction; so, active solicitude about it, and fair impartial consideration of its evidence before such conviction, is as really an exercise of a morally right temper, as is religious practice after. Thus, that religion is not intuitively true, but a matter of deduction and inference; that a conviction of its truth is not forced upon every one, but left to be, by some, collected with heedful attention to premises; this as much constitutes religious probation, as much affords sphere, scope, opportunity, for right and wrong behaviour, as any thing whatever does. And their manner of treating this subject, when laid before them, shows what is in their heart, and is an exertion of it.

Secondly, It appears to be a thing as evident, though it is not so much attended to, that if, upon consideration of religion, the evidence of it should seem to any persons doubtful in the highest supposable degree, even this doubtful evidence will, however, put them into a *general state of probation*, in the moral and religious sense. For, suppose a man to be really in doubt, whether such a person had not done him the greatest favor; or, whether his whole temporal interest did not depend upon that person; no one who had any sense of gratitude and of prudence, could possibly consider himself in the same situation, with regard to such person, as if he had no such doubt. In truth, it is as just to say, that certainty and doubt are the same, as to say, the situations now mentioned would leave a man as entirely at liberty, in point of gratitude

or prudence, as he would be, were he certain he had received no favor from such person, or that he no way depended upon him. And thus, though the evidence of religion which is afforded to some men, should be little more than that they are given to see the system of Christianity, or religion in general, to be supposable and credible, this ought in all reason to beget a serious practical apprehension that it may be true. And even this will afford matter of exercise, for religious suspense and deliberation, for moral resolution and self-government; because the apprehension that religion may be true, does as really lay men under obligations, as a full conviction that it is true. It gives occasion and motives to consider farther the important subject; to preserve attentively upon their minds a general implicit sense that they may be under divine moral government, an awful solicitude about religion, whether natural or revealed. Such apprehension ought to turn men's eyes to every degree of new light which may be had, from whatever side it comes, and induce them to refrain, in the mean time, from all immoralities, and live in the conscientious practice of every common virtue. Especially are they bound to keep at the greatest distance from all dissolute profaneness --for this the very nature of the case forbids; and to treat with highest reverence a matter upon which their own whole interest and being, and the fate of nature depends. This behaviour, and an active endeavour to maintain within themselves this temper, is the business, the duty and the wisdom of those persons, who complain of the doubtfulness of religion; is what they are under the most proper obligations to; and such behaviour is an exertion of, and has a tendency to improve in them, that character, which the practice of all the several duties of religion, from a full conviction of its truth, is an exertion of, and has a tendency to improve in others; others, I say, to whom God has afforded such conviction. Nay, considering the infinite importance of religion, revealed as well as natural, I think it may be said in general, that whoever will weigh the matter thoroughly, may see there is not near so much difference as is commonly imagined, between what ought in reason to be the rule of life, to those persons who are fully convinced of its truth, and to those who have only a serious doubting apprehension that it may be true. Their hopes, and fears, and obligations, will be in various degrees: but as the subject-matter of their hopes and fears is the same, so the subject-matter of their obligations, what they are bound to do and to refrain from, is not so very unlike.

It is to be observed farther, that, from a character of understanding, or a situation of influence in the world, some persons have it in their power to do infinitely more harm or good, by setting an example of profaneness, and avowed disregard to all religion, or, on the contrary, of a serious, though perhaps doubting, apprehension of its truth, and of a reverend regard to it under this doubtfulness, than they can do by acting well or ill in all the common intercourses amongst mankind; and consequently they are most highly accountable for a behaviour, which, they may easily foresee, is of such importance, and in which there is most plainly a right and a wrong; even admitting the evidence of religion to be as doubtful as is pretended.

The ground of these observations, and that which renders them just and true, is, that doubting necessarily implies some degree of evidence for that of which we doubt. For no person would be in doubt concerning the truth of a number of facts so and so circumstanced, which should accidentally come into his thoughts, and of which he had no evidence at all. And though in the case of an even chance, and where consequently we were in doubt, we should in common language say, that we had no evidence at all for either side; yet that situation of things which renders it an even chance and no more that such an event will happen, renders this case equivalent to all others, where there is such evidence on both sides of a question,* as leaves the mind in doubt concerning the truth. Indeed, in all these cases, there is no more evidence on the one side than on the other; but there is (what is equivalent to) much more for either, than for the truth of a number of facts which come into one's thoughts at random. And thus, in all these cases, doubt as much presupposes evidence, lower degrees of evidence, as belief presupposes higher, and certainty higher still. Any one, who will a little attend to the nature of evidence, will easily carry this observation on, and see, that between no evidence at all, and that degree of it which affords ground of doubt, there are as many intermediate degrees, as there are between that degree which is the ground of doubt, and demonstration. And, though we have not faculties to distinguish these degrees of evidence with any sort of exactness, yet, in proportion as they are discerned, they ought to influence our practice. For it is as real an imperfection in the moral character, not to be influenced in practice by a

* Introduction.

lower degree of evidence when discerned, as it is in the understanding, not to discern it. And as, in all subjects which men consider, they discern the lower as well as higher degrees of evidence, proportionably to their capacity of understanding; so in practical subjects, they are influenced in practice by the lower as well as higher degrees of it, proportionably to their fairness and honesty. And as, in proportion to defects in the understanding, men are unapt to see lower degrees of evidence, are in danger of overlooking evidence when it is not glaring, and are easily imposed upon in such cases; so, in proportion to the corruption of the heart, they seem capable of satisfying themselves with having no regard in practice to evidence acknowledged real, if it be not overbearing. From these things it must follow, that doubting concerning religion implies such a degree of evidence for it, as, joined with the consideration of its importance, unquestionably lays men under the obligations before mentioned, to have a dutiful regard to it in all their behaviour.

Thirdly, The difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved, which some complain of, is no more a just ground of complaint, than the external circumstances of temptation, which others are placed in; or than difficulties in the practice of it, after a full conviction of its truth. Temptations render our state a more improving state of discipline* than it would be otherwise; as they give occasion for a more attentive exercise of the virtuous principle, which confirms and strengthens it more than an easier or less attentive exercise of it could. Now, speculative difficulties are, in this respect, of the very same nature with these external temptations. For the evidence of religion not appearing obvious, is, to some persons, a temptation to reject it, without any consideration at all; and therefore requires such an attentive exercise of the virtuous principle, seriously to consider that evidence, as there would be no occasion for, but for such temptation. And the supposed doubtfulness of its evidence, after it has been in some sort considered, affords opportunity to an unfair mind, of explaining away, and deceitfully hiding from itself, that evidence which it might see: and also for men's encouraging themselves in vice, from hopes of impunity, though they do clearly see thus much at least, that these hopes are uncertain: in like manner, as the common temptations to many instances of folly, which end in temporal infamy and ruin, is the ground

* Part i. chap. 5.

pe of not being detected, and of escaping with impunity; ıe doubtfulness of the truth beforehand, that such foolish ıour will thus end in infamy and ruin. On the con- supposed doubtfulness in the evidence of religion calls nore careful and attentive exercise of the virtuous prin- in fairly yielding themselves up to the proper influence ' real evidence, though doubtful; and in practising con- iously all virtue, though under some uncertainty ıer the government in the universe may not possibly ch, as that vice may escape with impunity. And, in al, temptation, meaning by this word the lesser allure- ; to wrong, and difficulties in the discharge of our duty, ll as the greater ones; temptation, I say, as such, and ery kind and degree, as it calls forth some virtuous ; additional to what would otherwise have been wanting, ; but be an additional discipline and improvement of ', as well as probation of it, in the other senses of that

So that the very same account is to be given, why ridence of religion should be left in such a manner, as to 'e, in some, an attentive, solicitous, perhaps painful, ex- of their understanding about it; as why others should ıced in such circumstances as that the practice of its ıon duties, after a full conviction of the truth of it, should 'e attention, solicitude, and pains: or, why appearing fulness should be permitted to afford matter of tempta- o some; as why external difficulties and allurements d be permitted to afford matter of temptation to others. same account also is to be given, why some should be ised with temptations of both these kinds, as why others d be exercised with the latter in such very high de- , as some have been, particularly as the primitive tians were.

r does there appear any absurdity in supposing, that the lative difficulties in which the evidence of religion is ved, may make even the principal part of some per- trial. For, as the chief temptations of the generality e world, are, the ordinary motives to injustice or unre- ıed pleasure; or to live in the neglect of religion from rame of mind, which renders many persons almost with- eling as to any thing distant, or which is not the object eir senses; so there are other persons without this shal- ess of temper, persons of a deeper sense as to what is in-

visible and future, who not only see, but have a general practical feeling that what is to come will be present, and that things are not less real for their not being the object of sense; and who, from their natural constitution of body and of temper, and from their external condition, may have small temptations to behave ill, small difficulty in behaving well, in the common course of life. Now, when these latter persons have a distinct, full conviction of the truth of religion, without any possible doubts or difficulties, the practice of it is to them unavoidable, unless they will do a constant violence to their own minds; and religion is scarce any more a discipline to them, than it is to creatures in a state of perfection. Yet these persons may possibly stand in need of moral discipline and exercise, in a higher degree than they would have by such an easy practice of religion. Or it may be requisite, for reasons unknown to us, that they should give some further manifestation what is their moral character, to the creation of God, than such a practice of it would be. Thus, in the great variety of religious situations in which men are placed, what constitutes, what chiefly and peculiarly constitutes the probation, in all senses, of some persons, may be the difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved; and their principal and distinguished trial may be, how they will behave under and with respect to these difficulties. Circumstances in men's situation in their temporal capacity, analogous in good measure to this, respecting religion, are to be observed. We find, some persons are placed in such a situation in the world, as that their chief difficulty, with regard to conduct, is not the doing what is prudent when it is known; for this, in numberless cases, is as easy as the contrary: but to some, the principal exercise is, recollection, and being upon their guard against deceits; the deceits, suppose, of those about them; against false appearances of reason and prudence. To persons in some situations, the principal exercise, with respect to conduct, is attention, in order to inform themselves what is proper, what is really the reasonable and prudent part to act.

But as I have hitherto gone upon supposition, that men's dissatisfaction with the evidence of religion, is not owing to their neglects or prejudices; it must be added, on the other hand, in all common reason, and as what the truth of the case plainly requires should be added, that such dissatisfac

or possibly may be owing to those, possibly may be men's own fault. For,

If there are any persons, who never set themselves heartily, and in earnest, to be informed in religion; if there are any, who secretly wish it may not prove true, and are less attentive to evidence than to difficulties, and more to objections than to what is said in answer to them; these persons will scarce be thought in a likely way of seeing the evidence of religion, though it were most certainly true, and capable of being ever so fully proved. If any accustom themselves to consider this subject usually in the way of mirth and sport; or they attend to forms and representations, and inadequate manners of expression, instead of the real things intended by them, (for signs often can be no more than inadequately expressive of the things signified;) or if they substitute human errors in the room of divine truth; why may not all, or any of these things, hinder some men from seeing that evidence which really is seen by others; as a like turn of mind, with respect to matters of common speculation, and practice, does, we find by experience, hinder them from attaining that knowledge and right understanding, in matters of common speculation and practice, which more fair and attentive minds attain to? And the effect will be the same, whether their neglect of seriously considering the evidence of religion, and their indirect behaviour with regard to it, proceed from mere carelessness, or from the grosser vices; or whether it be owing to this, that forms, and figurative manners of expression, as well as errors, administer occasions of ridicule, when the things intended, and the truth itself, would not. Men may indulge a ludicrous turn so far, as to lose all sense of conduct and prudence in worldly affairs, and even, as it seems, to impair their faculty of reason. And in general, levity, carelessness, passion, and prejudice, do hinder us from being rightly informed, with respect to common things; and they may, in like manner, and perhaps in some farther providential manner, with respect to moral and religious subjects; may hinder evidence from being laid before us, and from being seen when it is. The Scripture* does declare, 'that every one shall not understand.' And it makes no difference by what

* Dan. xii. 10. See also Isa. xxix. 13, 14. Matt. vi. 23, and xi. 25, and xxiii. 11, 12. John iii. 9. John v. 44. 1 Cor. ii. 14, and 2 Cor. iv. 4. 2 Tim. iii. 13; and that affectionate, as well as authoritative admonition, so very many times inculcated, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' Grotius saw so strongly the thing intended in these and

providential conduct this comes to pass; whether the evidence of Christianity was, originally and with design, put and left so, as that those who are desirous of evading moral obligations, should not see it, and that honest-minded persons should; or whether it comes to pass by any other means.

Farther: The general proof of natural religion and of Christianity, does, I think, lie level to common men; even those the greatest part of whose time, from childhood to old age, is taken up with providing, for themselves and their families, the common conveniences, perhaps necessaries of life: those I mean, of this rank, who ever think at all of asking after proof, or attending to it. Common men, were they as much in earnest about religion as about their temporal affairs, are capable of being convinced upon real evidence, that there is a God who governs the world; and they feel themselves to be of a moral nature, and accountable creatures. And as Christianity entirely falls in with this their natural sense of things; so they are capable, not only of being persuaded, but of being made to see, that there is evidence of miracles wrought in attestation of it, and many appearing completions of prophecy. But though this proof is real and conclusive, yet it is liable to objections, and may be run up into difficulties; which, however, persons who are capable, not only of talking of, but of really seeing, are capable also of seeing through; *i. e.* not of clearing up and answering them, so as to satisfy their curiosity, for of such knowledge we are not capable with respect to any one thing in nature; but capable of seeing that the proof is not lost in these difficulties, or destroyed by these objections. But then a thorough examination into religion, with regard to these objections, which cannot be the business of every man, is a matter of pretty large compass, and from the nature of it, requires some knowledge, as well as time and attention, to see how the evidence comes out, upon balancing one thing with another, and what, upon the whole, is the amount of it. Now, if persons who have picked up these objections from others, and take for granted they are of weight, upon the word of those from whom they received them, or, by often retailing of them, come to see, or fancy they see, them to be of weight, will not prepare themselves for such an examination, with a competent degree of

other passages of Scripture of the like sense, as to say, that the proof given us of Christianity was less than it might have been, for this very purpose: *Ut ita sermo Evangelii tanquam lapis esset Lydius ad quem ingenia omnibus explorarentur.* De Ver. R. C. l. 2. towards the end.

knowledge; or will not give that time and attention to the subject, which, from the nature of it, is necessary for attaining such information: in this case, they must remain in doubtfulness, ignorance, or error; in the same way as they must with regard to common sciences, and matters of common life, if they neglect the necessary means of being informed in them.

But still, perhaps, it will be objected, that if a prince or common master were to send directions to a servant, he would take care, that they should always bear the certain marks who they came from, and that their sense should be always plain; so as that there should be no possible doubt, if he could help it, concerning the authority or meaning of them. Now, the proper answer to all this kind of objections is, that, wherever the fallacy lies, it is even certain we cannot argue thus with respect to Him who is the governor of the world; in particularly, that he does not afford us such information, with repect to our temporal affairs and interests, as experience abundantly shows. However, there is a full answer to this objection, from the very nature of religion. For, the reason why a prince would give his directions in this plain manner, is, that he absolutely desires such an external action should be done, without concerning himself with the motive or principle upon which it is done: *i. e.* he regards only the external event, or the thing's being done, and not at all, properly speaking, the doing of it, or the action. Whereas the whole of morality and religion consisting merely in action itself, there is no sort of parallel between the causes. But if the prince be supposed to regard only the action; *i. e.* only to desire to exercise, or in any sense prove, the understanding or loyalty of a servant, he would not always give his orders in such a plain manner. It may be proper to add, that the will of God, respecting morality and religion, may be considered, either as absolute, or as only conditional. If it be absolute, it can only be thus, that we should act virtuously in such given circumstances; not that we should be brought to act so, by his changing of our circumstances. And if God's will be thus absolute, then it is in our power, in the highest and strictest sense, to do or to contradict his will; which is a most weighty consideration. Or his will may be considered only as conditional,—that if we act so and so, we shall be rewarded; if otherwise, punished: of which conditional will of the Author of nature, the whole constitution of it affords most certain instances.

Upon the whole: That we are in a state of religion necessarily implies, that we are in a state of probation; and the credibility of our being at all in such a state being admitted, there seems no peculiar difficulty in supposing our probation to be, just as it is, in those respects which are above objected against. There seems no pretence from *the reason of the thing* to say, that the trial cannot equitably be any thing, but whether persons will act suitably to certain infomation, or such as admits no room for doubt; so as that there can be no danger of miscarriage, but either from their not attending to what they certainly know, or from overbearing passion hurrying them on to act contrary to it. For, since ignorance and doubt afford scope for probation in all senses, as really as intuitive conviction or certainty; and since the two former are to be put to the same account as difficulties in practice; men's moral probation may also be, whether they will take due care to inform themselves by impartial consideration, and afterwards whether they will act as the case requires, upon the evidence which they have, however doubtful. And this, we find by *experience*, is frequently our probation, in our temporal capacity. For the information which we want, with regard to our worldly interests, is by no means always given us of course, without any care of our own. And we are greatly liable to self-deceit from inward secret prejudices, and also to the deceit of others. So that to be able to judge what is the prudent part, often requires much and difficult consideration. Then, after we have judged the very best we can, the evidence upon which we must act, if we live and act at all, is perpetually doubtful to a very high degree. And the constitution and course of the world in fact is such, as that want of impartial consideration what we have to do, and venturing upon extravagant courses, because it is doubtful what will be the consequence, are often naturally, *i. e.* providentially, altogether as fatal, as misconduct occasioned by heedless inattention to what we certainly know, or disregarding it from overbearing passion.

Several of the observations here made may well seem strange, perhaps unintelligible, to many good men. But if the persons for whose sake they are made, think so; persons who object as above, and throw off all regard to religion under pretence of want of evidence; I desire them to consider again whether their thinking so, be owing to any thing unin-

intelligible in these observations, or to their own not having such a sense of religion and serious solicitude about it, as even their state of scepticism does in all reason require? It ought to be forced upon the reflection of these persons that our nature and condition necessarily require us, in the daily course of life, to act upon evidence much lower than what is commonly called probable; to guard, not only against what we fully believe will, but also against what we think it supposable may, happen; and to engage in pursuits when the probability is greatly against success, if it be credible that possibly we may succeed in them.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the particular Evidence for Christianity.

THE presumptions against revelation, and objections against the general scheme of Christianity, and particular things relating to it, being removed, there remains to be considered, what positive evidence we have for the truth of it; chiefly in order to see, what the analogy of nature suggests with regard to that evidence, and the objections against it; or to see what is, and is allowed to be, the plain natural rule of judgment and of action, in our temporal concerns, in cases where we have the same kind of evidence, and the same kind of objections against it, that we have in the case before us. Now, in the evidence of Christianity, there seems to be several things of great weight, not reducible to the head, either of miracles, or the completion of prophecy, in the common acceptation of the words. But these two are its direct and fundamental proofs; and those other things, however considerable they are, yet ought never to be urged apart from its direct proofs, but always to be joined with them. Thus the evidence of Christianity will be a long series of things, reaching, as it seems, from the beginning of the world to the present time, of great variety and compass, taking in both the direct, and also the collateral proofs, and making up, all of them together, one argument, the conviction arising from which kind of proof may be compared to what they call *the effect* in architecture or other works of art; a result from a great number of things so and so disposed, and taken into one view. I shall therefore, *first*, make some observations relating to miracles, and the appearing completions of prophecy; and consider what analogy suggests, in answer to the objections brought against this evidence. And, *secondly*, I shall endeavour to give some account of the general argument now mentioned, consisting both of the direct and collateral evidence, considered as making

up one argument; this being the kind of proof upon which we determine most questions of difficulty concerning common facts, alleged to have happened, or seeming likely to happen; especially questions relating to conduct.

First, I shall make some observations upon the direct proof of Christianity from miracles and prophecy, and upon the objections alleged against it.

I. Now, the following observations, relating to the historical evidence of miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, appear to be of great weight.

1. The Old Testament affords us the same historical evidence of the miracles of Moses and of the prophets, as of the common civil history of Moses and the kings of Israel; or, as of the affairs of the Jewish nation. And the Gospels and the Acts afford us the same historical evidence of the miracles of Christ and the Apostles, as of the common matters related in them. This, indeed, could not have been affirmed by any reasonable man, if the authors of these books, like many other historians, had appeared to make an entertaining manner of writing their aim; though they had interspersed miracles in their works, at proper distances, and upon proper occasions. These might have animated a dull relation, amused the reader, and engaged his attention. And the same account would naturally have been given of them, as of the speeches and descriptions of such authors; the same account, in a manner, as is to be given, why the poets make use of wonders and prodigies. But the facts, both miraculous and natural, in Scripture, are related in plain unadorned narratives; and both of them appear, in all respects, to stand upon the same foot of historical evidence. Farther: Some parts of Scripture, containing an account of miracles fully sufficient to prove the truth of Christianity, are quoted as genuine, from the age in which they are said to be written, down to the present: and no other parts of them, material in the present question, are omitted to be quoted, in such manner as to afford any sort of proof of their not being genuine. And, as common history, when called in question in any instance, may often be greatly confirmed by contemporary or subsequent events more known and acknowledged; and as the common Scripture history, like many others, is thus confirmed; so likewise is the miraculous history of it, not only in particular instances, but in general. For, the establishment of the Jewish and Christian religions, which were events contemporary with the miracles related to be wrought in at-

testation of both, or subsequent to them, these events are just what we should have expected, upon supposition such miracles were really wrought to attest the truth of those religions. These miracles are a satisfactory account of those events, of which no other satisfactory account can be given, nor any account at all, but what is imaginary merely and invented. It is to be added, that the most obvious, the most easy and direct account of this history, how it came to be written and to be received in the world, as a true history, is, that it really is so; nor can any other account of it be easy and direct. Now, though an account, not at all obvious, but very far-fetched and indirect, may indeed be, and often is, the true account of a matter; yet, it cannot be admitted on the authority of its being asserted. Mere guess, supposition, and possibility, when opposed to historical evidence prove nothing, but that historical evidence is not demonstrative.

Now, the just consequence from all this, I think, is, that the Scripture history, in general, is to be admitted as an authentic genuine history, till somewhat positive be alleged sufficient to invalidate it. But no man will deny the consequence to be, that it cannot be rejected, or thrown by as of no authority, till it can be proved to be of none; even though the evidence now mentioned for its authority were doubtful. This evidence may be confronted by historical evidence on the other side, if there be any; or general incredibility in the things related, or inconsistence in the general turn of the history, would prove it to be of no authority. But since, upon the face of the matter, upon a first and general view, the appearance is, that it is an authentic history, it cannot be determined to be fictitious without some proof that it is so. And the following observations, in support of these and coincident with them, will greatly confirm the historical evidence for the truth of Christianity.

2. The Epistles of St. Paul, from the nature of epistolary writing, and moreover, from several of them being written not to particular persons, but to churches, carry in them evidences of their being genuine, beyond what can be, in a mere historical narrative, left to the world at large. This evidence, joined with that which they have in common with the rest of the New Testament, seems not to leave so much as any particular pretence for denying their genuineness, considered as an ordinary matter of fact, or of criticism: I say, *particular* pretence for *denying* it; because any single fact, of such a kind and such antiquity, may have *general doubts* raised con-

cerning it, from the very nature of human affairs and human testimony. There is also to be mentioned, a distinct and particular evidence of the genuineness of the epistle chiefly referred to here, the first to the Corinthians; from the manner in which it is quoted by *Clemens Romanus*, in an epistle of his own to that church.* Now, these epistles afford a proof of Christianity, detached from all others, which is, I think, a thing of weight; and also a proof of a nature and kind peculiar to itself. For,

In them the author declares that he received the gospel in general, and the institution of the communion in particular, not from the rest of the Apostles, or jointly together with them, but alone from Christ himself; whom he declares, likewise conformably to the history in the Acts, that he saw after his ascension.† So that the testimony of St Paul is to be considered, as detached from that of the rest of the Apostles.

And he declares farther, that he was endued with a power of working miracles, as what was publicly known to those very people; speaks of frequent and great variety of miraculous gifts, as then subsisting in those very churches to which he was writing; which he was reproving for several irregularities; and where he had personal opposers: he mentions these gifts incidentally, in the most easy manner, and without effort; by way of reproof to those who had them, for their indecent use of them; and by way of depreciating them, in comparison of moral virtues. In short, he speaks to these churches of these miraculous powers, in the manner any one would speak to another of a thing, which was as familiar, and as much known in common to them both, as any thing in the world.‡ And this, as has been observed by several persons, is surely a very considerable thing.

3. It is an acknowledged historical fact, that Christianity offered itself to the world and demanded to be received, upon the allegation, *i. e.* as unbelievers would speak, upon the pretence of miracles, publicly wrought to attest the truth of it, in such an age; and that it was actually received by great numbers in that very age, and upon the professed belief of the reality of these miracles. And Christianity, including the dispensation of the Old Testament, seems distinguished by this from all other religions. I mean, that this does not appear

* Clem. Rom. Ep. i. c. 47.

† Gal. i. 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c. 1 Cor. xv. 8.

‡ Rom. xv. 19. 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10—28, &c. and chap. xiii. 1, 2, 8 and the whole xivth chap. 2 Cor. xii. 12, 13. Gal. iii. 2, 5.

to be the case with regard to any other: for surely it w
be supposed to lie upon any person, to prove, by positiv
torical evidence, that it was not. It does in no sort a
that Mahometanism was first received in the world upc
foot of supposed miracles,* *i. e.* public ones: for, as reve
is itself miraculous, all pretence to it must necessarily
some pretence of miracles. And it is a known fact, t
was immediately, at the very first, propagated by
means. And as particular institutions, whether in pag
or popery, said to be confirmed by miracles after those
tutions had obtained, are not to the purpose; so, were
what might be called historical proof, that any of them
introduced by a supposed divine command, believed to
tested by miracles, these would not be in any wise pa
For single things of this sort are easy to be accounte
after parties are formed, and have power in their hands
the leaders of them are in veneration with the multi
and political interests are blended with religious claims
religious distinctions. But before any thing of this kir
a few persons, and those of the lowest rank, all at o
bring over such great numbers to a new religion, and
to be received upon the particular evidence of miracles
is quite another thing. And I think it will be allow
any fair adversary, that the fact now mentioned, taki
all the circumstances of it, is peculiar to the Christia
gion. However, the fact itself is allowed, that Christ
obtained, *i. e.* was professed to be received in the world,
the belief of miracles, immediately in the age in whic
said those miracles were wrought: or that this is wh
first converts would have alleged, as the reason for thei
bracing it. Now, certainly it is not to be supposed, that
numbers of men, in the most distant parts of the world, s
forsake the religion of their country, in which they had
educated; separate themselves from their friends, particu
in their festival shows and solemnities, to which the cor
people are so greatly addicted, and which were of a n
to engage them much more than any thing of that
amongst us; and embrace a religion which could not bu
pose them to many inconveniences, and indeed must
been a giving up the world in a great degree, even fror
very first, and before the empire engaged in form ag
them: it cannot be supposed, that such numbers st

* See the Koran, chap. xiii. and cha

make so great, and, to say the least, so inconvenient a change in their whole institution of life, unless they were really convinced of the truth of those miracles, upon the knowledge or belief of which they professed to make it. And it will, I suppose, readily be acknowledged, that the generality of the first converts to Christianity must have believed them; that as, by becoming Christians, they declared to the world they were satisfied of the truth of those miracles, so this declaration was to be credited. And this their testimony is the same kind of evidence for those miracles, as if they had put it in writing, and these writings had come down to us. And it is real evidence, because it is of facts, which they had capacity and full opportunity to inform themselves of. It is also distinct from the direct or express historical evidence, though it is of the same kind; and it would be allowed to be distinct in all cases. For, were a fact expressly related by one or more ancient historians, and disputed in after ages; that this fact is acknowledged to have been believed, by great numbers of the age in which the historian says it was done, would be allowed an additional proof of such fact, quite distinct from the express testimony of the historian. The credulity of mankind is acknowledged, and the suspicions of mankind ought to be acknowledged too; and their backwardness even to believe, and greater still to practise, what makes against their interest. And it must particularly be remembered, that education, and prejudice, and authority, were against Christianity, in the age I am speaking of. So that the immediate conversion of such numbers, is a real presumption of somewhat more than human in this matter: I say presumption, for it is alleged as a proof, alone and by itself. Nor need any one of the things mentioned in this chapter be considered as a proof by itself; and yet all of them together may be one of the strongest.

Upon the whole, as there is large historical evidence, both direct and circumstantial, of miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, collected by those who have writ upon the subject; it lies upon unbelievers to show why this evidence is not to be credited. This way of speaking is, I think, just, and what persons who write in defence of religion naturally fall into. Yet, in a matter of such unspeakable importance, the proper question is, not whom it lies upon, according to the rules of argument, to maintain or confute objections; but, whether there really are any against this evidence, sufficient,

in reason, to destroy the credit of it? However, unbelievers seem to take upon them the part of showing that there are.

They allege, that numberless enthusiastic people, in different ages and countries, expose themselves to the same difficulties which the primitive Christians did; and are ready to give up their lives, for the most idle follies imaginable. But it is not very clear, to what purpose this objection is brought; for every one, surely, in every case, must distinguish between opinions and facts. And though testimony is no proof of enthusiastic opinions, or any opinions at all; yet, it is allowed, in all other cases to be a proof of facts. And a person's laying down his life in attestation of facts or of opinions, is the strongest proof of his believing them. And if the apostles and their contemporaries did believe the facts, in attestation of which they exposed themselves to sufferings and death, this their belief, or rather knowledge, must be a proof of those facts; for they were such as come under the observation of their senses. And though it is not of equal weight, yet it is of weight, that the martyrs of the next age, notwithstanding they were not eye-witnesses of those facts, as were the apostles and their contemporaries, had, however, full opportunity to inform themselves, whether they were true or not, and give equal proof of their believing them to be true.

But enthusiasm, it is said, greatly weakens the evidence of testimony even for facts, in matters relating to religion; some seem to think, it totally and absolutely destroys the evidence of testimony upon the subject. And, indeed, the powers of enthusiasm, and of diseases, too, which operate in a like manner, are very wonderful, in particular instances. But if great numbers of men not appearing in any peculiar degree weak, nor under any peculiar suspicion of negligence, affirm that they saw and heard such things plainly with their eyes and their ears, and are admitted to be in earnest; such testimony is evidence of the strongest kind we can have for any matter of fact. Yet possibly it may be overcome, strong as it is, by incredibility in the things thus attested, or by contrary testimony. And in an instance where one thought it was so overcome, it might be just to consider, how far such evidence could be accounted for by enthusiasm; for it seems as if no other imaginable account were to be given of it. But till such incredibility be shown, or contrary testimony produced, it cannot surely be expected, that so far-fetched, so indirect and wonderful an account of such testimony, as that of enthusiasm must be; an account so strange, that the generality of mankind can scarce

be made to understand what is meant by it; it cannot, I say, be expected, that such account will be admitted of such evidence, when there is this direct, easy, and obvious account of it, that people really saw and heard a thing not incredible which they affirm sincerely, and with full assurance, they did see and hear. Granting, then, that enthusiasm is not (strictly speaking) an absurd, but a possible account of such testimony, it is manifest that the very mention of it goes upon the previous supposition, that the things so attested are incredible; and therefore, need not be considered, till they are shown to be so. Much less need it be considered, after the contrary has been proved. And I think it has been proved, to full satisfaction, that there is no incredibility in a revelation, in general, or in such a one as the Christian in particular. However, as religion is supposed peculiarly liable to enthusiasm, it may just be observed, that prejudices almost without number and without name, romance, affectation, humour, a desire to engage attention or to surprise, the party-spirit, custom, little competitions, unaccountable likings and dislikings; these influence men strongly in common matters And as these prejudices are often scarce known or reflected upon by the persons themselves who are influenced by them, they are to be considered as influences of a like kind to enthusiasm. Yet human testimony in common matters is naturally and justly believed notwithstanding.

It is intimated farther, in a more refined way of observation, that though it should be proved, that the apostles and first Christians could not, in some respects, be deceived themselves, and, in other respects, cannot be thought to have intended to impose upon the world, yet, it will not follow, that their general testimony is to be believed, though truly handed down to us; because they might still in part, *i. e.* in other respects, be deceived themselves, and in part also designedly impose upon others; which, it is added, is a thing very credible, from that mixture of real enthusiasm, and real knavery, to be met with in the same characters. And, I must confess, I think the matter of fact contained in this observation upon mankind, is not to be denied; and that somewhat very much akin to it, is often supposed in Scripture as a very common case, and most severely reproved. But it were to have been expected, that persons capable of applying this observation as applied in the objection, might also frequently have met with the like mixed character, in instances where religion was quite out of the case. The thing plainly is, that mankind are

naturally endued with reason, or a capacity of distinguishing between truth and falsehood; and as naturally they are endued with veracity, or a regard to truth in what they say; but from many occasions, they are liable to be prejudiced and biassed, and deceived themselves, and capable of intending to deceive others, in every different degree; insomuch that, as we are all liable to be deceived by prejudice, so likewise it seems to be not an uncommon thing, for persons, who from their regard to truth, would not invent a lie entirely without any foundation at all, to propagate it with heightening circumstances, after it is once invented and set agoing. And others, though they would not *propagate* a lie, yet which is a lower degree of falsehood, will let it pass without contradiction. But, notwithstanding all this, human testimony remains still a natural ground of assent; and this assent, a natural principle of action.

It is objected farther, that however it has happened, the *fact* is, that mankind have, in different ages, been strangely deluded with pretences to miracles and wonders. But it is by no means to be admitted, that they have been oftener, or are at all more liable to be deceived by these pretences, than by others.

It is added, that there is a very considerable degree of historical evidence for miracles, which are on all hands acknowledged to be fabulous. But suppose there were even *the like* historical evidence for these, to what there is for those alleged in proof of Christianity, which yet is in no wise allowed; but suppose this; the consequence would not be, the evidence of the latter is not to be admitted. Nor is there a man in the world who, in common cases, would conclude thus. For what would such a conclusion really amount to but this, that evidence, confuted by contrary evidence, or any way overbalanced, destroys the credibility of other evidence, neither confuted nor overbalanced? To argue, that because there is, if there were, like evidence from testimony, for miracles acknowledged false, as for those in attestation of Christianity, therefore the evidence in the latter case is not to be credited, this is the same as to argue, that if two men of equally good reputation had given evidence in different cases no way connected, and one of them had been convicted of perjury, this confuted the testimony of the other.

Upon the whole, then, the general observation that human creatures are so liable to be deceived, from enthusiasm in religion, and principles equivalent to enthusiasm in common

matters, and in both from negligence; and that they are so capable of dishonestly endeavouring to deceive others; this does indeed weaken the evidence of testimony in all cases, but does not destroy it in any. And these things will appear, to different men, to weaken the evidence of testimony, in different degrees; in degrees proportionable to the observations they have made, or the notions they have any way taken up, concerning the weakness, and negligence, and dishonesty of mankind; or concerning the powers of enthusiasm, and prejudices equivalent to it. But it seems to me, that people do not know what they say, who affirm these things to destroy the evidence from testimony, which we have of the truth of Christianity. Nothing can destroy the evidence of testimony in any case, but a proof or probability, that persons are not competent judges of the facts to which they give testimony; or that they are actually under some indirect influence in giving it, in such particular case. Till this be made out, the *natural* laws of human actions require, that testimony be admitted. It can never be sufficient to overthrow direct historical evidence, indolently to say, that there are so many principles, from whence men are liable to be deceived themselves and disposed to deceive others, especially in matters of religion, that one knows not what to believe. And it is surprising persons can help reflecting, that this very manner of speaking supposes, they are not satisfied that there is nothing in the evidence, of which they speak thus; or that they can avoid observing, if they do make this reflection, that it is, on such a subject, a very material one.*

And over against all these objections, is to be set the importance of Christianity, as what must have engaged the attention of its first converts, so as to have rendered them less liable to be deceived from carelessness, than they would in common matters; and likewise the strong obligations to veracity, which their religion laid them under: so that the first and most obvious presumption is, that they could not be deceived themselves, nor would deceive others. And this presumption, in this degree, is peculiar to the testimony we have been considering.

In argument, assertions are nothing in themselves, and have an air of positiveness, which sometimes is not very easy; yet they are necessary, and necessary to be repeated, in order to connect a discourse, and distinctly to lay before the

* See the foregoing chapter.

view of the reader what is proposed to be proved, and what is left as proved. Now, the conclusion from the foregoing observations is, I think, beyond all doubt, this: that unbelievers must be forced to admit the external evidence for Christianity *i. e.* the proof of miracles wrought to attest it, to be of real weight and very considerable; though they cannot allow it to be sufficient to convince them of the reality of those miracles. And as they must, in all reason, admit this, so it seems to me, that upon consideration they would, in fact, admit it; those of them, I mean, who know any thing at all of the matter: in like manner as persons, in many cases, own, they see strong evidence from testimony, for the truth of things, which yet they cannot be convinced are true; cases, suppose, where there is contrary testimony, or things which they think, whether with or without reason, to be incredible. But there is no testimony contrary to that which we have been considering; and it has been fully proved, that there is no incredibility in Christianity in general, or in any part of it.

II. As to the evidence for Christianity from prophecy, I shall only make some few general observations, which are suggested by the analogy of nature; *i. e.* by the acknowledged natural rules of judging in common matters, concerning evidence of a like kind to this from prophecy.

1. The obscurity or unintelligibleness of one part of a prophecy, does not, in any degree, invalidate the proof of foresight, arising from the appearing completion of those other parts which are understood. For the case is evidently the same, as if those parts, which are not understood, were lost, or not written at all, or written in an unknown tongue. Whether this observation be commonly attended to or not, it is so evident, that one can scarce bring one's self to set down an instance in common matters, to exemplify it. However, suppose a writing, partly in cypher, and partly in plain words at length, and that, in the part one understood, there appeared mention of several known facts; it would never come into any man's thoughts to imagine, that if he understood the whole, perhaps he might find, that those facts were not, in reality, known by the writer. Indeed, both in this example, and the thing intended to be exemplified by it, our not understanding the whole, (the whole, suppose, of a sentence or a paragraph,) might sometimes occasion a doubt, whether one understood the literal meaning of such a part; but this comes under another consideration.

For the same reason though a man should be incapable

for want of learning, or opportunities of inquiry, or from not having turned his studies this way, even so much as to judge whether particular prophecies have been throughout completely fulfilled; yet he may see, in general, that they have been fulfilled, to such a degree, as, upon very good ground, to be convinced of foresight more than human in such prophecies, and of such events being intended by them. For the same reason also, though, by means of the deficiencies in civil history, and the different accounts of historians, the most learned should not be able to make out to satisfaction, that such parts of the prophetic history have been minutely and throughout fulfilled; yet a very strong proof of foresight may arise from that general completion of them which is made out; as much proof of foresight, perhaps, as the Giver of prophecy intended should ever be afforded by such parts of prophecy.

2. A long series of prophecy being applicable to such and such events, is itself a proof, that it was intended of them; as the rules, by which we naturally judge and determine, in common cases parallel to this, will show. This observation I make in answer to the common objection against the application of the prophecies, that, considering each of them distinctly by itself, it does not at all appear, that they were intended of those particular events to which they are applied by Christians; and, therefore, it is to be supposed, that, if they meant any thing, they were intended of other events unknown to us, and not of these at all.

Now, there are two kinds of writing, which bear a great resemblance to prophecy, with respect to the matter before us; the mythological and the satirical, where the satire is, to a certain degree, concealed. And a man might be assured, that he understood what an author intended by a fable or parable, related without any application or moral, merely from seeing it to be easily capable of such application, and that such a moral might naturally be deduced from it. And he might be fully assured, that such persons and events were intended in a satirical writing, merely from its being applicable to them. And, agreeably to the last observation, he might be in a good measure satisfied of it, though he were not enough informed in affairs, or in the story of such persons, to understand half the satire. For, his satisfaction, that he understood the meaning, the intended meaning, of these writings, should be greater or less, in proportion as he saw the general turn of them to be capable of such application and

in proportion to the number of particular things capable of it. And thus, if a long series of prophecy is applicable to the present state of the church, and to the political situations of the kingdoms of the world, some thousand years after these prophecies were delivered, and a long series of prophecy delivered before the coming of Christ is applicable to him; these things are in themselves a proof, that the prophetic history was intended of him, and of those events: in proportion as the general turn of it is capable of such application, and to the number and variety of particular prophecies capable of it. And, though in all just way of consideration, the appearing completion of prophecies is to be allowed to be thus explanatory of, and to determine their meaning; yet it is to be remembered farther, that the ancient Jews applied the prophecies to a Messiah before his coming, in much the same manner as Christians do now; and that the primitive Christians interpreted the prophecies respecting the state of the church and of the world in the last ages, in the sense which the event seems to confirm and verify. And from these things it may be made appear,

3. That the showing, even to a high probability, if that could be, that the prophets thought of some other events, in such and such predictions, and not those at all which Christians allege to be completions of those predictions; or that such and such prophecies are capable of being applied to other events than those to which Christians apply them—that this would not confute or destroy the force of the argument from prophecy, even with regard to those very instances. For, observe how this matter really is. If one knew such a person to be the sole author of such a book, and was certainly assured, or satisfied to any degree, that one knew the whole of what he intended in it, one should be assured or satisfied to such degree, that one knew the whole meaning of that book; for the meaning of a book is nothing but the meaning of the author. But if one knew a person to have compiled a book out of memoirs, which he received from another, of vastly superior knowledge in the subject of it, especially if it were a book full of great intricacies and difficulties, it would in no wise follow, that one knew the whole meaning of the book, from knowing the whole meaning of the compiler; for the original memoirs, *i. e.* the author of them, might have, and there would be no degree of presumption, in many cases, against supposing him to have, some farther meaning than the compiler saw. To say, then, that the Scriptures and the

things contained in them can have no other or farther meaning, than those persons thought or had, who first recited or wrote them, is evidently saying, that those persons were the original, proper, and sole authors of those books, *i. e.* that they are not inspired; which is absurd, whilst the authority of these books is under examination, *i. e.* till you have determined they are of no divine authority at all. Till this be determined, it must in all reason be supposed, not indeed that they have, for this is taking for granted that they are inspired, but that they may have, some farther meaning than what the compilers saw or understood. And, upon this supposition, it is supposable also, that this farther meaning may be fulfilled. Now, events corresponding to prophecies, interpreted in a different meaning from that which the prophets are supposed to have understood them; this affords, in a manner, the same proof that this different sense was originally intended, as it would have afforded, if the prophets had not understood their predictions in the sense it is supposed they did; because there is no presumption of their sense of them being the whole sense of them. And it has been already shown, that the apparent completions of prophecy must be allowed to be explanatory of its meaning. So that the question is, whether a series of prophecy has been fulfilled, in a natural or proper, *i. e.* in any real sense of the words of it. For such completion is equally a proof of foresight more than human, whether the prophets are, or are not, supposed to have understood it in a different sense. I say, supposed; for though I think it clear, that the prophets did not understand the full meaning of their predictions, it is another question, how far they thought they did, and in what sense they understood them.

Hence may be seen, to how little purpose those persons busy themselves, who endeavour to prove that the prophetic history is applicable to events of the age in which it was written, or of ages before it. Indeed, to have proved this before there was any appearance of a farther completion of it, might have answered some purpose; for it might have prevented the expectation of any such farther completion. Thus, could Porphyry have shown, that some principal parts of the book of Daniel, for instance, the seventh verse of the seventh chapter, which the Christians interpreted of the latter ages, was applicable to events which happened before or about the age of Antiochus Epiphanes; this might have prevented them from expecting any farther completion of it. And unless there was then, as I think there must have been, external evidence con-

cerning that book, more than is come down to us, such a discovery might have been a stumbling-block in the way of Christianity itself; considering the authority which our Saviour has given to the book of Daniel, and how much the general scheme of Christianity presupposes the truth of it. But even this discovery, had there been any such,* would be of very little weight with reasonable men now; if this passage, thus applicable to events before the age of Porphyry, appears to be applicable also to events, which succeeded the dissolution of the Roman empire. I mention this, not at all as intending to insinuate, that the division of this empire into ten parts, for it plainly was divided into about that number, were, alone and by itself, of any moment in verifying the prophetic history; but only as an example of the thing I am speaking of. And thus, upon the whole, the matter of inquiry evidently must be, as above put, Whether the prophecies are applicable to Christ, and to the present state of the world and of the church; applicable in such a degree, as to imply foresight: not whether they are capable of any other application; though I know no pretence for saying, the general turn of them is capable of any other.

These observations are, I think, just, and the evidence referred to in them, real; though there may be people who will not accept of such imperfect information from Scripture. Some too have not integrity and regard enough to truth, to attend to evidence, which keeps the mind in doubt, perhaps perplexity, and which is much of a different sort from what they expected. And it plainly requires a degree of modesty and fairness, beyond what every one has, for a man to say, not to the world, but to himself, that there is a real appearance of somewhat of great weight in this matter, though he is not able thoroughly to satisfy himself about it; but it shall have its influence upon him, in proportion to its appearing reality and weight. It is much more easy, and more falls in with the negligence, presumption, and wilfulness of the generality, to determine at once, with a decisive air, there is nothing in it. The prejudices arising from that absolute contempt and scorn, with which this evidence is treated in the world, I do not mention.

* It appears, that Porphyry did nothing worth mentioning in this way. For Jerome on the place says: *Duas posteriores bestias—in uno Macedonum regno ponit.* And as to the ten kings: *Decem reges enumerat, qui fuerunt sævissimi: ipsosque reges non unius ponit regni, verbi gratia, Macedoniæ, Syriæ, Asiæ, et Ægypti; sed de diversis regnis unum efficit regum ordinem.* And in this way of interpretation, any thing may be made of any thing.

For what indeed can be said to persons, who are weak enough in their understandings to think this any presumption against it; or, if they do not, are yet weak enough in their temper to be influenced by such prejudices, upon such a subject?

I shall now, *secondly*, endeavour to give some account of the general argument for the truth of Christianity, consisting both of the direct and circumstantial evidence, considered as making up one argument. Indeed, to state and examine this argument fully, would be a work much beyond the compass of this whole Treatise; nor is so much as a proper abridgment of it to be expected here. Yet the present subject requires to have some brief account of it given. For it is the kind of evidence upon which most questions of difficulty, in common practice, are determined; evidence arising from various coincidences, which support and confirm each other, and in this manner prove, with more or less certainty, the point under consideration. And I choose to do it also, *first*, Because it seems to be of the greatest importance, and not duly attended to by every one, that the proof of revelation is, not some direct and express things only, but a great variety of circumstantial things also; and that though each of these direct and circumstantial things is indeed to be considered separately, yet they are afterwards to be joined together; for that the proper force of the evidence consists in the results of those several things, considered in their respects to each other, and united into one view; and, in the *next* place, Because it seems to me, that the matters of fact here set down, which are acknowledged by unbelievers, must be acknowledged by them also to contain together a degree of evidence of great weight, if they could be brought to lay these several things before themselves distinctly, and then with attention consider them together; instead of that cursory thought of them, to which we are familiarized. For being familiarized to the cursory thought of things, as really hinders the weight of them from being seen, as from having its due influence upon practice.

The thing asserted, and the truth of which is to be inquired into, is this: that over and above our reason and affections, which God has given us for the information of our judgment and conduct of our lives, he has also, by external revelation, given us an account of himself and his moral government over the world, implying a future state of rewards and punishments; *i. e.* hath revealed the system of natural reli-

gion; for natural religion may be externally revealed by God, as the ignorant may be taught it by mankind, their fellow creatures—that God, I say, has given us the evidence of revelation, as well as the evidence of reason, to ascertain this moral system; together with an account of a particular dispensation of Providence, which reason could no way have discovered, and a particular institution of religion founded on it, for the recovery of mankind out of their present wretched condition, and raising them to the perfection and final happiness of their nature.

This revelation, whether real or supposed, may be considered as wholly historical. For prophecy is nothing but the history of events before they come to pass: doctrines also are matters of fact; and precepts come under the same notion. And the general design of Scripture, which contains in it this revelation, thus considered as historical, may be said to be, to give us an account of the world, in this one single view, as God's world; by which it appears essentially *distinguished* from all other books, so far as I have found, except such as are copied from it. It begins with an account of God's creation of the world, in order to ascertain and distinguish from all others, who is the object of our worship, by what he has done in order to ascertain who he is, concerning whose providence commands, promises, and threatenings, this sacred book all along treats; the Maker and Proprietor of the world, he whose creatures we are, the God of nature: in order likewise to distinguish him from the idols of the nations, which are either imaginary beings, *i. e.* no beings at all; or else part of that creation, the historical relation of which is here given. And St John, not improbably with an eye to this Mosaic account of the creation, begins his gospel with an account of our Saviour's pre-existence, and that, 'all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made;'† agreeably to the doctrine of St Paul, that 'God created all things by Jesus Christ.'‡ This being premised, the Scripture taken together, seems to profess to contain a kind of an abridgment of the history of the world, in the view just now mentioned; that is, a general account of the condition of religion and its professors, during the continuance of that apostacy from God, and state of wickedness, which it every where supposes the world to lie in. And this account of the state of religion carries with it some brief account of the political

† John I. 3. ‡ Eph. iii. 9.

state of things, as religion is affected by it. Revelation indeed considers the common affairs of this world, and what is going on in it, as a mere scene of distraction, and cannot be supposed to concern itself with foretelling at what time Rome, or Babylon, or Greece, or any particular place, should be the most conspicuous seat of that tyranny and dissoluteness, which all places equally aspire to be; cannot, I say, be supposed to give any account of this wild scene for its own sake. But it seems to contain some very general account of the chief governments of the world, as the general state of religion has been, is, or shall be, affected by them, from the first transgression and during the whole interval of the world's continuing in its present state, to a certain future period, spoken of both in the Old and New Testament, very distinctly, and in great variety of expression: 'The times of the restitution of all things;'* when 'the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets;'† when 'the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people,'‡ as it is represented to be during this apostacy, but 'judgment shall be given to the saints,'§ and 'they shall reign;'‖ 'and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.'¶

Upon this general view of the Scripture, I would remark how great a length of time the whole relation takes up, near six thousand years of which are past: and how great a variety of things it treats of; the natural and moral system or history of the world, including the time when it was formed, all contained in the very first book, and evidently written in a rude and unlearned age; and in subsequent books, the various common and prophetic history, and the particular dispensation of Christianity. Now all this together gives the largest scope for criticism; and for confutation of what is capable of being confuted, either from reason, or from common history, or from any inconsistence in its several parts. And it is a thing which deserves, I think, to be mentioned, that whereas some imagine, the supposed doubtfulness of the evidence for revelation implies a positive argument that it is not true; it appears, on the contrary, to imply a positive argument that it is true. For, could any common relation of such

* Acts iii. 21. † Rev. x. 7. ‡ Dan. ii. § Dan. vii. 22.
‖ Rev. xi. 17, 18, ch. xx. ¶ Dan. vii.

antiquity, extent, and variety, (for in these things the stress of what I am now observing lies,) be proposed to the examination of the world; that it could not, in an age of knowledge and liberty, be confuted, or shown to have nothing in it, to the satisfaction of reasonable men; this would be thought a strong presumptive proof of its truth. And indeed it must be a proof of it just in proportion to the probability, that if it were false, it might be shown to be so; and this, I think, is scarce pretended to be shown but upon principles and in ways of arguing which have been clearly obviated.* Nor does it at all appear, that any sect of men who believe natural religion, are of the opinion, that Christianity has been thus confuted. But to proceed:

Together with the moral system of the world, the Old Testament contains a chronological account of the beginning of it, and from thence, an unbroken genealogy of mankind for many ages before common history begins; and carried on as much farther, as to make up a continued thread of history of the length of between three and four thousand years. It contains an account of God's making a covenant with a particular nation, that they should be his people, and he would be their God, in a peculiar sense; of his often interposing miraculously in their affairs; giving them the promise, and, long after, the possession, of a particular country; assuring them of the greatest national prosperity in it, if they would worship him, in opposition to the idols which the rest of the world worshipped, and obey his commands; and threatening them with unexampled punishments, if they disobeyed him, and fell into the general idolatry: insomuch, that this one nation should continue to be the observation and the wonder of all the world. It declares particularly, that "God would scatter them among all people, from one end of the earth unto the other;" but "when they should return unto the Lord their God, he would have compassion upon them, and gather them, from all the nations whither he had scattered them;" that "Israel should be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation, and not be ashamed or confounded, world without end." And as some of these promises are conditional, others are as absolute as any thing can be expressed, that the time should come, when "the people should be all righteous, and inherit the land forever:" that "though God would make a full end of all nations whither he had scattered them, yet would he not make

* Chap. 2, 3, &c.

a full end of them:" that "he would bring again the captivity of his people Israel, and plant them upon their land, and they should be no more pulled up out of their land:" that "the seed of Israel should not cease from being a nation forever."* It foretells, that God would raise them up a particular person, in whom all his promises should be fulfilled; the Messiah who should be, in a high and eminent sense, their anointed Prince and Saviour. This was foretold in such a manner, as raised a general expectation of such a person in the nation, as appears from the New Testament, and is an acknowledged fact; an expectation of his coming at such a particular time, before any one appeared, claiming to be that person, and where there was no ground for such an expectation but from the prophecies; which expectation, therefore, must in all reason be presumed to be explanatory to those prophecies, if there were any doubt about their meaning. It seems moreover to foretell, that this person should be rejected by that nation, to whom he had been so long promised, and though he was so much desired by them.† And it expressly foretells, that he should be the Saviour of the Gentiles; and even that the completion of the scheme, contained in this book, and then begun, and in its progress, should be somewhat so great, that, in comparison with it, the restoration of the Jews alone would be but of small account. 'It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be for salvation unto the end of the earth.' And, 'In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it—for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations—and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day, and the idols he shall utterly abolish.'‡ The Scripture farther contains an account, that at the time the Messiah was expected, a person rose up, in this nation, claiming to be that Messiah, to be the person whom all the prophecies

* Deut. xxxiii. 64. Ch. xxx. 2, 3. Isa. xlv. 17. Ch. lx. 21. Jer. xxx. 11. Ch. lxvi. 28. Amos ix. 15. Jer. xxxi. 36.

† Isa. viii. 14, 15. Ch. xlix. 5. Ch. liii. Mal. i. 10, 11. and Ch. iii.

‡ Isa. xlix. 6. Ch. ii. Ch. xi. Ch. lvi. 7. Mal. i. 11.—To which must be added, the other prophecies of the like kind, several in the New Testament, and very many in the Old, which describe what shall be the completion of the revealed plan of Providence.

referred to, and in whom they should centre; that he spent some years in a continued course of miraculous works, and endued his immediate disciples and followers with a power of doing the same, as a proof of the truth of that religion which he commissioned them to publish; that, invested with this authority and power, they made numerous converts in the remotest countries, and settled and established his religion in the world; to the end of which, the Scripture professes to give a prophetic account of the state of this religion amongst mankind.

Let us now suppose a person utterly ignorant of history, to have all this related to him, out of the Scriptures. Or, suppose such a one, having the Scriptures put into his hands, to remark these things in it, not knowing but that the whole, even its civil history, as well as the other parts of it, might be, from beginning to end, an entire invention; and to ask, What truth was in it, and whether the revelation here related was real or a fiction? And, instead of a direct answer, suppose him, all at once, to be told the following confessed facts; and then to unite them into one view.

Let him first be told, in how great a degree the profession and establishment of natural religion, the belief that there is one God to be worshipped, that virtue is his law, and that mankind shall be rewarded and punished hereafter, as they obey and disobey it here; in how very great a degree, I say, the profession and establishment of this moral system in the world, is owing to the revelation, whether real or supposed, contained in this book; the establishment of this moral system, even in those countries which do not acknowledge the proper authority of the Scripture. Let him be told also, what number of nations do acknowledge its proper authority. Let him then take in consideration, of what importance religion is to mankind. And upon these things, he might, I think, truly observe, that this supposed revelation's obtaining and being received in the world, with all the circumstances and effects of it, considered together as one event, is the most conspicuous and important event in the story of mankind: that a book of this nature, and thus promulged and recommended to our consideration, demands, as if by a voice from heaven, to have its claims most seriously examined into; and that, before such examination, to treat it with any kind of scoffing and ridicule, is an offence against natural piety. But

it is to be remembered, that how much soever the establishment of natural religion in the world is owing to the Scripture revelation, this does not destroy the proof of religion from reason, any more than the proof of *Euclid's Elements* is destroyed, by a man's knowing or thinking that he should never have seen the truth of the several propositions contained in it, nor had those propositions come into his thoughts, but for that mathematician.

Let such a person as we are speaking of, be, in the next place, informed of the acknowledged antiquity of the first parts of this book; and that its chronology, its account of the time when the earth, and the several parts of it, were first peopled with human creatures, is no way contradicted, but is really confirmed, by the natural and civil history of the world, collected from common historians, from the state of the earth, and the late invention of arts and sciences. And, as the Scripture contains an unbroken thread of common and civil history, from the creation to the captivity, for between three and four thousand years; let the person we are speaking of be told, in the next place, that this general history, as it is not contradicted, but is confirmed by profane history, as much as there would be reason to expect, upon supposition of its truth; so there is nothing in the whole history itself, to give any reasonable ground of suspicion, of its not being, in the general, a faithful and literally true genealogy of men, and series of things. I speak here only of the common Scripture history, or of the course of ordinary events related in it, as distinguished from miracles, and from the prophetic history. In all the Scripture narrations of this kind, following events arise out of foregoing ones, as in all other histories. There appears nothing related as done in any age, not conformable to the manners of that age; nothing in the account of a succeeding age, which, one would say, could not be true, or was improbable, from the account of things in the preceding one. There is nothing in the characters, which would raise a thought of their being feigned; but all the internal marks imaginable of their being real. It is to be added also, that mere genealogies, bare narratives of the number of years which persons called by such and such names lived, do not carry the face of fiction; perhaps do carry some presumption of veracity; and all unadorned narratives, which have nothing to surprise, may be thought to carry somewhat of the like presumption too. And the domestic and the political history is plainly credible. There may be incidents in Scripture,

which, taken alone in the naked way they are told, may appear strange, especially to persons of other manners, temper, education; but there are also incidents of undoubted truth, in many or most persons' lives, which, in the same circumstances, would appear to the full as stange. There may be mistakes of transcribers, there may be other real or seeming mistakes, not easy to be particularly accounted for; but there are certainly no more things of this kind in the Scripture, than what were to have been expected in books of such antiquity; and nothing, in any wise, sufficient to discredit the general narrative. Now, that a history, claiming to commence from the creation, and extending in one continued series, through so great a length of time, and variety of events, should have such appearances of reality and truth in its whole contexture, is surely a very remarkable circumstance in its favor. And as all this is applicable to the common history of the New Testament, so there is a farther credibility, and a very high one, given to it by profane authors; many of these writing of the same times, and confirming the truth of customs and events, which are incidentally, as well as more purposely mentioned in it. And this credibility of the common Scripture history, gives some credibility to its miraculous history; especially as this is interwoven with the common, so as that they imply each other, and both together make up one relation.

Let it then be more particularly observed to this person, that it is an acknowledged matter of fact, which is indeed implied in the foregoing observation, that there was such a nation as the Jews, of the greatest antiquity, whose government and general polity was founded on the law, here related to be given them by Moses as from Heaven: that natural religion, though with rites additional, yet no way contrary to it, was their established religion, which cannot be said of the Gentile world; and that their very being, as a nation, depended upon their acknowledgment of one God, the God of the universe. For suppose, in their captivity in Babylon, they had gone over to the religion of their conquerors, there would have remained no bond of union, to keep them a distinct people. And whilst they were under their own kings, in their own country, a total apostacy from God would have been the dissolution of their whole government. They in such a sense nationally acknowledged and worshipped the Maker of heaven and earth, when the rest of the world were sunk in idolatry, as rendered them, in fact, the peculiar people of God. And this so remarkable

an establishment and preservation of natural religion amongst them, seems to add some peculiar credibility to the historical evidence for the miracles of Moses and the prophets; because these miracles are a full satisfactory account of this event, which plainly wants to be accounted for, and cannot otherwise.

Let this person, supposed wholly ignorant of history, be acquainted farther, that one claiming to be the Messiah, of Jewish extraction, rose up at the time when this nation, from the prophecies above mentioned, expected the Messiah: that he was rejected, as it seemed to have been foretold he should, by the body of the people under the direction of their rulers. that in the course of a very few years he was believed on, and acknowledged as the promised Messiah, by great numbers among the Gentiles, agreeably to the prophecies of Scripture, yet not upon the evidence of prophecy, but of miracles, of which miracles we also have strong historical evidence; (by which I mean here no more than must be acknowledged by unbelievers; for let pious frauds and follies be admitted to weaken, it is absurd to say they destroy, our evidence of miracles wrought in proof of Christianity:) that this religion approving itself to the reason of mankind, and carrying its own evidence with it. so far as reason is a judge of its system, and being no way contrary to reason in those parts of it which require to be believed upon the mere authority of its Author; that this religion, I say, gradually spread and supported itself, for some hundred years, not only without any assistance from temporal power, but under constant discouragements, and often the bitterest persecutions from it, and then became the religion of the world; that, in the mean time, the Jewish nation and government were destroyed in a very remarkable manner, and the people carried away captive and dispersed through the most distant countries; in which state of dispersion they have remained fifteen hundred years; and that they remain a numerous people, united among themselves, and distinguished from the rest of the world, as they were in the days of Moses, by the profession of his law, and every where looked upon in a manner, which one scarce knows how distinctly to express, but in the words of the prophetic account of it, given so many ages before it came to pass: 'Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.'‡

‡ Deut. xxviii. 37

The appearance of a standing miracle, in the Jews re
ing a distinct people in their dispositions, and the confirm
which this event appears to give to the truth of revel
may be thought to be answered, by their religion forbi
them intermarriages with those of any other, and presc
them a great many peculiarities in their food, by which
are debarred from the means of incorporating with the p
in whose countries they live. This is not, I think, a sat
tory account of that which it pretends to account for.
what does it pretend to account for? The correspondenc
tween this event and the prophecies; or the coinciden
both with a long dispensation of Providence, of a peculia
ture, towards that people formerly? No. It is only the
itself which is offered to be thus accounted for; which
event taken alone, abstracted from all such correspond
and coincidence, perhaps would not have appeared mi
lous; but that correspondence and coincidence may b
though the event itself be supposed not. Thus the co
rence of our Saviour's being born at Bethlehem, with a
foregoing series of prophecy and other coincidences, is d
less miraculous, the series of prophecy, and other c
dences, and the event, being admitted; though the event i
his birth at that place, appears to have been brought a
in a natural way; of which, however, no one can be cer

And as several of these events seem, in some degre
pressly, to have verified the prophetic history already
likewise they may be considered farther, as having a pec
aspect towards the full completion of it; as affording
presumption that the whole of it shall, one time or othe
fulfilled. Thus, that the Jews have been so wonderfully
served in their long and wide dispersion; which is indee
direct fulfilling of some prophecies, but is now mentioned
as looking forward to somewhat yet to come: that na
religion came forth from Judea, and spread in the degr
has done over the world, before lost in idolatry; whic
gether with some other things, have distinguished that
place, in like manner as the people of it are distinguis
that this great change of religion over the earth, was bro
about under the profession and acknowledgment, that J
was the promised Messiah: things of this kind naturally
the thoughts of serious men towards the full completi
the prophetic history, concerning the final restoration of
people; concerning the establishment of the everlasting k
dom among them, the kingdom of the Messiah; and

future state of the world, under this sacred government. Such circumstances and events compared with these prophecies, though no completions of them, yet would not, I think, be spoken of as nothing in the argument, by a person upon his first being informed of them. They fall in with the prophetic history of things still future, give it some additional credibility, have the appearance of being somewhat in order to the full completion of it.

Indeed it requires a good degree of knowledge, and great calmness and consideration, to be able to judge, thoroughly, of the evidence for the truth of Christianity, from that part of the prophetic history which relates to the situation of the kingdoms of the world, and to the state of the church, from the establishment of Christianity to the present time. But it appears from a general view of it, to be very material. And those persons who have thoroughly examined it, and some of them were men of the coolest tempers, greatest capacities, and least liable to imputations of prejudice, insist upon it as determinately conclusive.

Suppose now a person quite ignorant of history, first to recollect the passages above mentioned out of Scripture, without knowing but that the whole was a late fiction, then to be informed of the correspondent facts now mentioned, and to unite them all into one view: that the profession and establishment of natural religion in the world, is greatly owing, in different ways, to this book, and the supposed revelation which it contains; that it is acknowledged to be of the earliest antiquity; that its chronology and common history are entirely credible; that this ancient nation, the Jews, of whom it chiefly treats, appear to have been, in fact, the people of God, in a distinguished sense; that as there was a national expectation amongst them, raised from the prophecies, of a Messiah to appear at such a time, so one at this time appeared, claiming to be that Messiah; that he was rejected by this nation, but received by the Gentiles, not upon the evidence of prophecy, but of miracles; that the religion he taught supported itself under the greatest difficulties, gained ground, and at length became the religion of the world; that in the mean time the Jewish polity was utterly destroyed, and the nation dispersed over the face of the earth; that notwithstanding this, they have remained a distinct numerous people for so many centuries, even to this day; which not only appears to be the express completion of several prophecies concerning them; but also renders it, as one may speak, a visible and easy possi-

bility, that the promises made to them as a nation, may yet be fulfilled. And to these acknowledged truths, let the person we have been supposing add, as I think he ought whether every one will allow it or no, the obvious appearances which there are, of the state of the world, in other respects besides what relates to the Jews, and of the Christian church, having so long answered, and still answering to the prophetic history. Suppose, I say, these facts set over against the things before mentioned out of the Scripture, and seriously compared with them; the joint view of both together, must, I think, appear of very great weight to a considerate reasonable person: of much greater, indeed, upon having them first laid before him, than is easy for us, who are so familiarized to them, to conceive, without some particular attention for that purpose.

All these things, and the several particulars contained under them, require to be distinctly and most thoroughly examined into; that the weight of each may be judged of, upon such examination, and such conclusion drawn as results from their united force. But this has not been attempted here. I have gone no farther than to show, that the general imperfect view of them now given, the confessed historical evidence for miracles, and the many obvious appearing completions of prophecy, together with the collateral things* here mentioned, and there are several others of the like sort; that all this together, which, being fact, must be acknowledged by unbelievers, amounts to real evidence of somewhat more than human in this matter: evidence much more important, than careless men, who have been accustomed only to transient and partial views of it, can imagine; and indeed abundantly sufficient to act upon. And these things, I apprehend, must be acknowledged by unbelievers. For though they may say, that the historical evidence of miracles, wrought in attestation of Christianity, is not sufficient to convince them that such miracles were really wrought; they cannot deny, that there is such historical evidence, it being a known matter of fact that there is. They may say, the conformity between the prophecies and events, is by accident; but there are many instances in which such conformity itself cannot be denied. They may say, with regard to such kind of collateral things as those above mentioned, that any odd accidental events,

* All the particular things mentioned in this chapter, not reducible to the head of certain miracles, or determinate completions of prophecy

without meaning, will have a meaning found in them by fanciful people; and that such as are fanciful in any one certain way, will make out a thousand coincidents, which seem to favor their peculiar follies. Men, I say, may talk this; but no one who is serious, can possibly think these things to be nothing, if he considers the importance of collateral things, and even of lesser circumstances, in the evidence of probability, as distinguished, in nature, from the evidence of demonstration. In many cases, indeed, it seems to require the truest judgment, to determine with exactness the weight of circumstantial evidence; but it is very often altogether as convincing, as that which is the most express and direct.

This general view of the evidence for Christianity, considered as making one argument, may also serve to recommend to serious persons, to set down every thing which they think may be of any real weight at all in proof of it, and particularly the many seeming completions of prophecy; and they will find, that, judging by the natural rules, by which we judge of probable evidence in common matters, they amount to a much higher degree of proof, upon such a joint review, than could be supposed upon considering them separately, at different times; how strong soever the proof might before appear to them, upon such separate views of it. For probable proofs, by being added, not only increase the evidence, but multiply it. Nor should I dissuade any one from setting down what he thought made for the contrary side. But then it is to be remembered, not in order to influence his judgment, but his practice, that a mistake on one side, may be, in its consequences, much more dangerous than a mistake on the other. And what course is most safe, and what most dangerous, is a consideration thought very material, when we deliberate, not concerning events, but concerning conduct in our temporal affairs. To be influenced by this consideration in our judgment, to believe or disbelieve upon it, is indeed as much prejudice, as any thing whatever. And, like other prejudices, it operates contrary ways in different men. For some are inclined to believe what they hope; and others, what they fear. And it is manifest unreasonableness, to apply to men's passions in order to gain their assent. But in deliberations concerning conduct, there is nothing which reason more requires to be taken into the account, than the importance of it. For, suppose it doubtful, what would be the consequence of acting in this, or in a contrary manner; still, that taking one side could be attended with little or no

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but impossible to show, in like manner, the united for
the whole argument in one view.

However, lastly, as it has been made appear, that th
no presumption against a revelation as miraculous; tha
general scheme of Christianity, and the principal parts
are conformable to the experienced constitution of things
the whole perfectly credible; so the account now given c
positive evidence for it, shows, that this evidence is such
from the nature of it, cannot be destroyed, though it sh
be lessened.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Objections which may be made against arguing from the Analogy of Nature to Religion.

If every one would consider, with such attention as they are bound, even in point of morality, to consider, what they judge and give characters of, the occasion of this chapter would be, in some good measure at least, superseded. But since this is not to expected; for some we find do not concern themselves to understand even what they write against; since this treatise, in common with most others, lies open to objections, which may appear very material to thoughtful men at first sight; and, besides that, seems peculiarly liable to the objections of such as can judge without thinking, and of such as can censure without judging; it may not be amiss to set down the chief of these objections which occur to me, and consider them to their hands. And they are such as these:—

"That it is a poor thing to solve difficulties in revelation, by saying, that there are the same in natural religion; when what is wanting is to clear both of them, of these their common, as well as other their respective, difficulties: but that it is a strange way indeed of convincing men of the obligations of religion, to show them that they have as little reason for their worldly pursuits; and a strange way of vindicating the justice and goodness of the Author of nature, and of removing the objections against both, to which the system of religion lies open, to show, that the like objections lie against natural providence; a way of answering objections against religion, without so much as pretending to make out, that the system of it, or the particular things in it objected against, are reasonable—especially, perhaps, some may be inattentive enough to add, must this be thought strange, when it is confessed that analogy is no answer to such objections: that when this sort of reason-

ing is carried to the utmost length it can be imagined ca of, it will yet leave the mind in a very unsatisfied state; that it must be unaccountable ignorance of mankind, to gine they will be prevailed with to forego their present ests and pleasures, from regard to religion, upon doubtfu dence."

Now, as plausible as this way of talking may appear, appearance will be found in a great measure owing to views, which show but part of an object, yet show that tinctly; and to undeterminate language. By these n weak men are often deceived by others, and ludicrous m themselves. And even those who are serious and consid cannot always readily disentangle, and at once clearly through the perplexities in which subjects themselves a volved; and which are heightened by the deficiencies an abuse of words. To this latter sort of persons, the follo reply to each part of this objection severally, may be of assistance; as it may also tend a little to stop and st others.

First, The thing wanted, *i. e.* what men require, is to all difficulties cleared. And this is, or, at least for any thi know to the contrary, it may be, the same, as requiring to prehend the divine nature, and the whole plan of Provi from everlasting. But it hath always been allowed to a from what is acknowledged to what is disputed. And i no other sense a poor thing, to argue from natural religion vealed, in the manner found fault with, than it is to arg numberless other ways of probable deduction and infe in matters of conduct, which we are continually reduced necessity of doing. Indeed the epithet *poor* may be ap I fear, as properly to great part, or the whole, of human l it is to the things mentioned in the objection. Is it not a thing, for a physician to have so little knowledge in the c diseases, as even the most eminent have? To act upo jecture and guess, where the life of man is concerned? doubtedly it is: but not in comparison of having no sk all in that useful art, and being obliged to act wholly i dark.

Further: Since it is as unreasonable as it is comm urge objections against revelation, which are of equal w against natural religion; and those who do this, if they a confuted themselves, deal unfairly with others, in maki seem that they are arguing only against revelation, or pa lar doctrines of it, when in reality they are arguing ag

ral providence; it is a thing of consequence to show, that h objections are as much levelled against natural religion, against revealed. And objections, which are equally ap- able to both, are, properly speaking, answered, by its g shown that they are so, provided the former be admitted e true. And without taking in the consideration how inctly this is admitted, it is plainly very material to ob- ve, that as the things objected against in natural religion, of the same kind with what is certain matter of experi- e in the course of providence, and in the information which d affords us concerning our temporal interest under his go- nment; so the objections against the system of Christi- ty and the evidence of it, are of the very same kind with se which are made against the system and evidence of ural religion. However, the reader upon review may see, t most of the analogies insisted upon, even in the latter rt of this treatise, do not necessarily require to have more en for granted than is in the former; that there is an Au- r of nature, or natural Governor of the world; and Chris- nity is vindicated, not from its analogy to natural religion, t chiefly, from its analogy to the experienced constitution nature.

Secondly, Religion is a practical thing, and consists in such determinate course of life; as being what, there is reason think, is commanded by the Author of nature, and will, on the whole, be our happiness under his government. w if men can be convinced that they have the like reason believe this, as to believe that taking care of their temporal airs will be to their advantage; such conviction cannot t be an argument to them for the practice of religion. And there be really any reason for believing one of these, and deavouring to preserve life, and secure ourselves the neces- ries and conveniences of it; then there is reason also for lieving the other, and endeavouring to secure the interest it oposes to us. And if the interest which religion proposes us be infinitely greater than our whole temporal interest, en there must be proportionably greater reason for endea- uring to secure one, than the other: since by the supposi- n, the probability of our securing one, is equal to the pro- bility of our securing the other. This seems plainly unan- verable; and has a tendency to influence fair minds, who nsider what our condition really is, or upon what evidence e are naturally appointed to act; and who are disposed to squiesce in the terms upon which we live, and attend to and

follow that practical instruction, whatever it be, which afforded us.

But the chief and proper force of the argument referred to in the objection, lies in another place. For it is said, that a proof of religion is involved in such inextricable difficulties as to render it doubtful; and that it cannot be supposed, that if it were true, it would be left upon doubtful evidence. Here then, over and above the force of each particular difficulty or objection, these difficulties and objections, taken together, are turned into a positive argument against the truth of religion, which argument would stand thus. If religion were true, it would not be left doubtful, and open to objections to the degree in which it is; therefore, that it is thus left, not only renders the evidence of it weak, and lessens its force, in proportion to the weight of such objections; but also shows it to be false, or is a general presumption of its being so. Now the observation, that from the natural constitution and course of things, we must in our temporal concerns, almost continually, and in matters of great consequence, act upon evidence of like kind and degree to the evidence of religion, is an answer to this argument; because it shows, that it is according to the conduct and character of the Author of nature to appoint we should act upon evidence like to that, which this argument presumes he cannot be supposed to appoint we should act upon: it is an instance, a general one made up of numerous particular ones, of somewhat in his dealing with us similar to what is said to be incredible. And as the force of this answer lies merely in the parallel which there is between the evidence for religion and for our temporal conduct; the answer is equally just and conclusive, whether the parallel be made out, by showing the evidence of the former to be higher, or the evidence of the latter to be lower.

Thirdly, The design of this treatise is not to vindicate the character of God, but to show the obligations of men; it is not to justify his providence, but to show what belongs to us to do. These are two subjects, and ought not to be confounded. And though they may at length run up into each other, yet observations may immediately tend to make out the latter, which do not appear, by any immediate connexion, to the purpose of the former; which is less our concern than many seem to think. For, 1*st*, It is not necessary we should justify the dispensations of Providence against objections, any farther than to show, that the things objected against may, for aught we know, be consistent with justice and goodness

Suppose, then, that there are things in the system of this world, and plan of Providence relating to it, which taken alone would be unjust; yet it has been shown unanswerably, that we could take in the reference which these things may have to other things present, past, and to come; to the whole scheme, which the things objected against are parts of; these very things might, for aught we know, be found to be, not only consistent with justice, but instances of it. Indeed it has been shown, by the analogy of what we see, not only possible that this may be the case, but credible that it is. And thus objections, drawn from such things, are answered, and the evidence is vindicated, as far as religion makes its vindication necessary. Hence it appears, *2dly*, That objections against the divine justness and goodness are not endeavoured to be removed, by showing that the like objections, allowed to be really conclusive, lie against natural providence: but those objections being supposed and shown not to be conclusive, the things objected against, considered as matters of fact, are farther shown to be credible, from their conformity to the constitution of nature; for instance, that God will reward and punish men for their actions hereafter, from the observation that he does reward and punish them for their actions here. And this, I apprehend, is of weight. And I add, *3dly*, it would be of weight, even though those objections were not answered. For, there being the proof of religion above set down, and religion implying several facts; for instance, again, the fact last mentioned, that God will reward and punish men for their actions hereafter; the observation that his present method of government is by rewards and punishments, shows that future fact not to be incredible; whatever objections men may think they have against it, as unjust or unmerciful, according to their notions of justice and mercy; or as improbable from their belief of necessity. I say, *as improbable;* for it is evident no objection against it, *as unjust*, can be urged from necessity; since this notion as much destroys injustice, as it does justice. Then, *4thly*, Though objections against the reasonableness of the system of religion, cannot indeed be answered without entering into a consideration of its reasonableness, yet objections against the credibility or truth of it may. Because the system of it is reducible into what is properly matter of fact; and the truth, the probable truth, of facts, may be shown without consideration of their reasonableness. For is it necessary, though, in some cases and respects, it is highly useful and proper, yet it is not necessary, to give a proof

of the reasonableness of every precept enjoined us, and every particular dispensation of Providence, which comes i the system of religion. Indeed the more thoroughly a per of a right disposition is convinced of the perfection of the div nature and conduct, the farther he will advance towards t perfection of religion, which St John speaks of.* But general obligations of religion are fully made out, by prov the reasonableness of the practice of it. And that the pr tice of religion *is* reasonable, may be shown, though no m could be proved, than that the system of it *may be so*, aught we know to the contrary; and even without enter into the distinct consideration of this. And from hence, 5*t*. It is easy to see, that though the analogy of nature is not immediate answer to objections against the wisdom, the tice, or goodness, of any doctrine or precept of religion; it may be, as it is, an immediate and direct answer to wha really intended by such objections; which is, to show t the things objected against are incredible.

Fourthly, It is most readily acknowledged, that the fo going Treatise is by no means satisfactory; very far ind from it: but so would any natural institution of life appea reduced into a system, together with its evidence. Le ing religion out of the case, men are divided in their opini whether our pleasures over-balance our pains; and whet it be, or be not, eligible to live in this world. And were such controversies settled, which, perhaps, in specula would be found involved in great difficulties; and were it termined, upon the evidence of reason, as nature has de mined it to our hands, that life is to be preserved; yet s the rules which God has been pleased to afford us, for esc ing the miseries of it, and obtaining its satisfactions, the ru for instance, of preserving health and recovering it when l are not only fallible, and precarious, but very far from be exact. Nor are we informed by nature, in future con gencies and accidents, so as to render it at all certain, wha the best method of managing our affairs. What will be success of our temporal pursuits, in the common sense of word *success*, is highly doubtful. And what will be the s cess of them, in the proper sense of the word; *i. e.* what h piness or enjoyment we shall obtain by them, is doubtful i much higher degree. Indeed, the unsatisfactory nature the evidence, with which we are obliged to take up, in

* 1 John iv. 18.

daily course of life, is scarce to be expressed. Yet men do not throw away life, or disregard the interests of it, upon account of this doubtfulness. The evidence of religion then being admitted real, those who object against it, as not satisfactory, *i. e.* as not being what they wish it, plainly forget the very condition of our being; for satisfaction, in this sense, does not belong to such a creature as man. And, which is more material, they forget also the very nature of religion. For, religion presupposes, in all those who will embrace it, a certain degree of integrity and honesty; which it was intended to try whether men have or not, and to exercise in such as have it, in order to its improvement. Religion presupposes this as much, and in the same sense, as speaking to a man presupposes he understands the language in which you speak; or as warning a man of any danger, presupposes that he has such a regard to himself, as that he will endeavour to avoid it. And therefore the question is not at all, Whether the evidence of religion be satisfactory? but, Whether it be, in reason, sufficient to prove and discipline that virtue which it presupposes? Now, the evidence of it is fully sufficient for all those purposes of probation; how far soever it is from being satisfactory, as to the purposes of curiosity, or any other: and indeed it answers the purposes of the former in several respects, which it would not do, if it were as overbearing as is required. One might add farther, that whether the motives, or the evidence for any course of actions, be satisfactory, meaning here by that word, what satisfies a man, that such a course of action will in event be for his good; his need never be, and I think, strictly speaking, never is, the practical question in common matters. But the practical question in all cases, is, Whether the evidence for a course of action be such, as, taking in all circumstances, makes the faculty within us, which is the guide and judge of conduct,* determine that course of action to be prudent? Indeed, satisfaction that it will be for our interest or happiness, abundantly determines an action to be prudent; but evidence, almost infinitely lower than this, determines actions to be so too, even in the conduct of every day.

Fifthly, As to the objection concerning the influence which this argument, or any part of it, may, or may not, be expected to have upon men, I observe, as above, that religion being intended for a trial and exercise of the morality of every person's

* See Dissertation 2.

character, who is a subject of it; and there being, as I have shown, such evidence for it, as is sufficient, in reason, to influence men to embrace it; to object, that it is not to be imagined mankind will be influenced by such evidence, is nothing to the purpose of the foregoing Treatise. For the purpose of it is not to inquire, What sort of creatures mankind are; but What the light and knowledge, which is afforded them, requires they should be? to show how, in reason, they ought to behave; not how, in fact, they will behave. This depends upon themselves, and is their own concern; the personal concern of each man in particular. And how little regard the generality have to it, experience, indeed, does too fully show. But religion, considered as a probation, has had its end upon all persons, to whom it has been proposed, with evidence sufficient in reason to influence their practice; for by this means they have been put into a state of probation; let them behave as they will in it. And thus, not only revelation, but reason also, teaches us, that by the evidence of religion being laid before men, the designs of Providence are carrying on, not only with regard to those who will, but likewise with regard to those who will not, be influenced by it. However, *lastly*, the objection here referred to, allows the things insisted upon in this Treatise to be of some weight; and if so, it may be hoped it will have some influence. And if there be a probability that it will have any at all, there is the same reason in kind, though not in degree, to lay it before men, as there would be, if it were likely to have a greater influence.

And farther, I desire it may be considered, with respect to the whole of the foregoing objections, that in this Treatise I have argued upon the principles of others,* not my own; and have omitted what I think true, and of the most importance, because by others thought unintelligible, or not true. Thus I have argued upon the principles of the Fatalists, which I do not believe; and have omitted a thing of the utmost importance, which I do believe, the moral fitness and unfitness of actions, prior to all will whatever; which I apprehend as certainly to determine the divine conduct, as speculative truth and falsehood necessarily determine the divine judgment. Indeed

* By *arguing upon the principles of others*, the reader will observe is meant, not proving any thing *from* those principles, but *notwithstanding* them. Thus religion is proved, not *from* the opinion of necessity, which is absurd, but *notwithstanding* or *even though* that opinion were admitted to be true.

the principle of liberty, and that of moral fitness, so force themselves upon the mind, that moralists, the ancients as well as moderns, have formed their language upon it. And probably it may appear in mine, though I have endeavoured to avoid it: and in order to avoid it, have sometimes been obliged to express myself in a manner which will appear strange to such as do not observe the reason for it; but the general argument here pursued does not at all suppose, or proceed upon, these principles. Now, these two abstract principles of liberty and moral fitness being omitted, religion can be considered in no other view than merely as a question of fact; and in this view it is here considered. It is obvious, that Christianity, and the proof of it, are both historical. And even natural religion is, properly, a matter of fact. For, that there is a righteous Governor of the world, is so; and this proposition contains the general system of natural religion. But then, several abstract truths, and in particular those two principles, are usually taken into consideration in the proof of it; whereas it is here treated of only as a matter of fact. To explain this: that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones, is an abstract truth; but that they appear so to our mind, is only a matter of fact. And this last must have been admitted, if any thing was, by those ancient sceptics, who would not have admitted the former; but pretend to doubt, Whether there were any such thing as truth; or, Whether we could certainly depend upon our faculties of understanding for the knowledge of it in any case. So likewise, that there is, in the nature of things, an original standard of right and wrong in actions, independent upon all will, but which unalterably determines the will of God, to exercise that moral government over the world which religion teaches, *i. e.* finally and upon the whole to reward and punish men respectively as they act right or wrong; this assertion contains an abstract truth, as well as matter of fact. But suppose in the present state, every man, without exception, was rewarded and punished, in exact proportion as he followed or transgressed that sense of right and wrong, which God has implanted in the nature of every man; this would not be at all an abstract truth, but only a matter of fact. And though this fact were acknowledged by every one, yet the very same difficulties might be raised, as are now, concerning the abstract questions of liberty and moral fitness: and we should have a proof, even the certain one of experience, that the government of the world was perfectly moral, without taking in the consideration of those

questions: and this proof would remain, in what way soever they were determined. And thus, God having given mankind a moral faculty, the object of which is actions, and which naturally approves some actions as right and of good desert, and condemns others as wrong and of ill desert; that he will, finally and upon the whole, reward the former and punish the latter, is not an assertion of an abstract truth, but of what is as mere a fact as his doing so at present would be. This future fact I have not indeed proved with the force with which it might be proved, from the principles of liberty and moral fitness; but without them have given a really conclusive practical proof of it, which is greatly strengthened by the general analogy of nature; a proof easily cavilled at, easily shown not to be demonstrative, for it is not offered as such; but impossible, I think, to be evaded or answered. And thus the obligations of religion are made out, exclusively of the questions concerning liberty and moral fitness; which have been perplexed with difficulties and abstruse reasonings, as every thing may.

Hence, therefore, may be observed distinctly, what is the force of this Treatise. It will be, to such as are convinced of religion, upon the proof arising out of the two last mentioned principles, an additional proof and a confirmation of it, to such as do not admit those principles, an original proof of it, and a confirmation of that proof. Those who believe will here find the scheme of Christianity cleared of objections, and the evidence of it in a peculiar manner strengthened. those who do not believe, will at least be shown the absurdity of all attempts to prove Christianity false, the plain undoubted credibility of it, and, I hope, a good deal more.

And thus, though some perhaps may seriously think, that analogy, as here urged, has too great stress laid upon it; and ridicule, unanswerable ridicule, may be applied, to show the argument from it in a disadvantageous light: yet there can be no question, but that it is a real one. For religion, both natural and revealed, implying in it numerous facts; analogy being a confirmation of all facts to which it can be applied, as it is the only proof of most, cannot but be admitted by every one to be a material thing, and truly of weight on the side of religion, both natural and revealed; and it ought to be particularly regarded by such as profess to follow nature and to be less satisfied with abstract reasonings.

CONCLUSION.

WHATEVER account may be given, of the strange inattention and disregard, in some ages and countries, to a matter of such importance as religion, it would, before experience, be incredible, that there should be the like disregard in those, who have had the moral system of the world laid before them, as it is by Christianity, and often inculcated upon them; because this moral system carries in it a good degree of evidence for its truth, upon its being barely proposed to our thoughts. There is no need of abstruse reasonings and distinctions, to convince an unprejudiced understanding, that there is a God who made and governs the world, and who will judge it in righteousness; though they may be necessary to answer abstruse difficulties, when once such are raised; when the very meaning of those words, which express most intelligibly the general doctrine of religion, is pretended to be uncertain, and the clear truth of the thing itself is obscured by the intricacies of speculation. But, to an unprejudiced mind, ten thousand thousand instances of design, cannot but prove a Designer. And it is intuitively manifest, that creatures ought to live under a dutiful sense of their Maker; and that justice and charity must be his laws, to creatures whom he has made social, and placed in society. Indeed, the truth of revealed religion, peculiarly so called, is not self-evident, but requires external proof, in order to its being received. Yet inattention, among us, to revealed religion, will be found to imply the same dissolute immoral temper of mind, as inattention to natural religion; because, when both are laid before us, in the manner they are in Christian countries of liberty, our obligations to inquire into both, and to embrace both upon supposition of their truth, are obligations of the same nature. For, revelation claims to be the voice of God; and our obligation to attend to his voice, is, surely, moral in all cases. And as it is insisted, that its evidence is conclusive, upon thorough consideration of it; so it offers itself to us

with manifest obvious appearances of having something more than human in it, and therefore in all reason requires to have its claims most seriously examined into. It is to be added, that though light and knowledge, in what manner soever afforded us, is equally from God; yet a miraculous revelation has a peculiar tendency, from the first principles of our nature, to awaken mankind, and inspire them with reverence and awe: and this is a peculiar obligation, to attend to what claims to be so with such appearances of truth. It is therefore most certain, that our obligations to inquire seriously into the evidence of Christianity, and, upon supposition of its truth, to embrace it, are of the utmost importance, and moral in the highest and most proper sense. Let us then suppose, that the evidence of religion in general, and of Christianity, has been seriously inquired into by all reasonable men among us. Yet we find many professedly to reject both, upon speculative principles of infidelity. And all of them do not content themselves with a bare neglect of religion, and enjoying their imaginary freedom from its restraints. Some go much beyond this. They deride God's moral government over the world: they renounce his protection, and defy his justice: they ridicule and vilify Christianity, and blaspheme the Author of it; and take all occasions to manifest a scorn and contempt of revelation. This amounts to an active setting themselves against religion; to what may be considered as a positive principle of irreligion; which they cultivate within themselves, and, whether they intend this effect or not, render habitual, as a good man does the contrary principle. And others, who are not chargeable with all this profligateness, yet are in avowed opposition to religion, as if discovered to be groundless. Now admitting, which is the supposition we go upon, that these persons act upon what they think principles of reason, and otherwise they are not to be argued with; it is really inconceivable, that they should imagine they clearly see the whole evidence of it, considered in itself, to be nothing at all; nor do they pretend this. They are far indeed from having a just notion of its evidence; but they would not say its evidence was nothing, if they thought the system of it, with all its circumstances, were credible, like other matters of science or history. So that their manner of treating it must proceed, either from such kind of objections against all religion, as have been answered or obviated in the former part of this Treatise; or else from objections and difficulties, supposed more peculiar to Christianity. Thus, they entertain preju-

dices against the whole notion of a revelation and miraculous interpositions. They find things in Scripture, whether in incidental passages or in the general scheme of it, which appear to them unreasonable. They take for granted, that if Christianity were true, the light of it must have been more general, and the evidence of it more satisfactory, or rather overbearing; that it must and would have been, in some way, otherwise put and left, than it is. Now, this is not imagining they see the evidence itself to be nothing, or inconsiderable; but quite another thing. It is being fortified against the evidence, in some degree acknowledged, by thinking they see the system of Christianity, or somewhat which appears to them necessarily connected with it, to be incredible or false; fortified against that evidence, which might, otherwise, make great impression upon them. Or, lastly, if any of these persons are, upon the whole, in doubt concerning the truth of Christianity, their behaviour seems owing to their taking for granted, through strange inattention, that such doubting is, in a manner, the same thing as being certain against it.

To these persons, and to this state of opinion concerning religion, the foregoing Treatise is adapted. For, all the general objections against the moral system of nature having been obviated, it is shown, that there is not any peculiar presumption at all against Christianity, either considered as not discoverable by reason, or as unlike to what is so discovered; nor any worth mentioning, against it as miraculous, if any at all: none certainly, which can render it in the least incredible. It is shown, that upon supposition of a divine revelation, the analogy of nature renders it beforehand highly credible, I think probable, that many things in it must appear liable to great objections; and that we must be incompetent judges of it, to a great degree. This observation is, I think, unquestionably true, and of the very utmost importance: but it is urged, as I hope it will be understood, with great caution of not vilifying the faculty of reason, which is 'the candle of the Lord within us;'* though it can afford no light, where it does not shine: nor judge, where it has no principles to judge upon. The objections here spoken of, being first answered in the view of objections against Christianity as a matter of fact, are in the next place considered as urged more immediately against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of the Christian dispensation. And it is fully made out, that they admit

* Prov. xx. 27

of exactly the like answer, in every respect, to what the like objections against the constitution of nature admit of: that, as partial views give the appearance of wrong to things, which upon farther consideration and knowledge of their relations to other things, are found just and good; so it is perfectly credible, that the things objected against the wisdom and goodness of the Christian dispensation, may be rendered instances of wisdom and goodness by their reference to other things beyond our view: because Christianity is a scheme as much above our comprehension, as that of nature; and, like that, a scheme in which means are made use of to accomplish ends, and which, as is most credible, may be carried on by general laws. And it ought to be attended to, that this is not an answer taken merely or chiefly from our ignorance; but from somewhat positive, which our observation shows us. For, to like objections, the like answer is experienced to be just, in numberless parallel cases. The objections against the Christian dispensation, and the method by which it is carried on, having been thus obviated, in general and together: the chief of them are considered distinctly, and the particular things objected to are shown credible, by their perfect analogy, each part, to the constitution of nature. Thus, if man be fallen from his primitive state, and to be restored, and infinite wisdom and power engages in accomplishing our recovery; it were to have been expected, it is said, that this should have been effected at once, and not by such a long series of means, and such a various economy of persons and things; one dispensation preparatory to another, this to a farther one, and so on through an indefinite number of ages, before the end of the scheme proposed can be completely accomplished; a scheme conducted by infinite wisdom, and executed by Almighty power. But now, on the contrary, our finding that every thing in the constitution and course of nature is thus carried on, shows such expectations concerning revelation to be highly unreasonable; and is a satisfactory answer to them, when urged as objections against the credibility, that the great scheme of Providence in the redemption of the world, may be of this kind, and to be accomplished in this manner. As to the particular method of our redemption, the appointment of a Mediator between God and man; this has been shown to be most obviously analogous to the general conduct of nature, *i. e.* the God of nature, in appointing others to be the instruments of his mercy, as we experience in the daily course of Providence. The condition of this world

which the doctrine of our redemption by Christ presupposes, so much falls in with natural appearances, that heathen moralists inferred it from those appearances; inferred, that human nature was fallen from its original rectitude, and, in consequence of this, degraded from its primitive happiness. Or, however this opinion came into the world, these appearances must have kept up the tradition, and confirmed the belief of it. And it was the general opinion, under the light of nature, that repentance and reformation, alone and by itself, was not sufficient to do away sin, and procure a full remission of the penalties annexed to it; and as the reason of the thing does not at all lead to any conclusion; so every day's experience shows us that reformation is not, in any sort, sufficient to prevent the present disadvantages and miseries, which, in the natural course of things, God has annexed to folly and extravagance. Yet there may be ground to think, that the punishments, which by the general laws of divine government, are annexed to vice, may be prevented; that provision may have been, even originally, made, that they should be prevented by some means or other, though they could not by reformation alone. For we have daily instances of such mercy, in the general conduct of nature; compassion provided for misery,* medicines for diseases, friends against enemies. There is provisions made, in the original constitution of the world, that much of the natural bad consequences of our follies, which persons themselves alone cannot prevent, may be prevented by the assistance of others; assistance, which nature enables, and disposes, and appoints them to afford. By a method of goodness analogous to this, when the world lay in wickedness, and consequently in ruin, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son' to save it; and 'he being made perfect by suffering, became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.'† Indeed, neither reason nor analogy would lead us to think, in particular, that the interposition of Christ, in the manner in which he did interpose, would be of that efficacy for recovery of the world, which the Scripture teaches us it was: but neither would reason nor analogy lead us to think, that other particular means would be of the efficacy, which experience shows they are, in numberless instances. And therefore, as the case before us does not admit of experience, so that neither reason nor analogy can show how, or in what particular way,

* Sermon 6th, at the Rolls. † John iii. 16. Heb. v. 9.

the interposition of Christ, as revealed in Scripture, is of that efficacy which it is there represented to be; this is no kind nor degree of presumption against its being really of that efficacy. Farther: the objections against Christianity, from the light of it not being universal, nor its evidence so strong as might possibly be given us, have been answered by the general analogy of nature. That God has made such variety of creatures, is indeed an answer to the former; but that he dispenses his gifts in such variety, both of degrees and kinds, amongst creatures of the same species, and even to the same individuals at different times, is a more obvious and full answer to it. And it is so far from being the method of Providence, in other cases, to afford us such overbearing evidence as some require in proof of Christianity, that, on the contrary, the evidence upon which we are naturally appointed to act in common matters, throughout a very great part of life, is doubtful in a high degree. And, admitting the fact, that God has afforded to some no more than doubtful evidence of religion, the same account may be given of it, as of difficulties and temptations with regard to practice. But as it is not impossible, surely, that this alleged doubtfulness may be men's own fault, it deserves their most serious consideration, whether it be not so. However, it is certain that doubting implies a degree of evidence for that of which we doubt, and that this degree of evidence as really lays us under obligations, as demonstrative evidence.

The whole then of religion is throughout credible; nor is there, I think, any thing relating to the revealed dispensation of things more different from the experienced constitution and course of nature, than some parts of the constitution of nature are from other parts of it. And if so, the only question which remains is, What positive evidence can be alleged for the truth of Christianity? This too, in general, has been considered, and the objections against it estimated. Deduct therefore what is to be deducted from that evidence, upon account of any weight which may be thought to remain in these objections, after what the analogy of nature has suggested in answer to them; and then consider what are the practical consequences from all this, upon the most sceptical principles one can argue upon, (for I am writing to persons who entertain these principles:) and, upon such consideration, it will be obvious, that immorality, as little excuse as it admits of in itself, is greatly

ggravated, in persons who have been made acquainted with hristianity, whether they believe it or not; because the moral stem of nature, or natural religion, which Christianity lays fore us, approves itself, almost intuitively, to a reasonable ind, upon seeing it proposed. In the next place, with regard Christianity it will be observed, that there is a middle, beeen a full satisfaction of the truth of it, and the satisfaction the contrary. The middle state of mind between these o consists in a serious apprehension that it may be true, ned with doubt, whether it be so. And this, upon the best dgment I am able to make, is as far towards speculative inlelity, as any sceptic can at all be supposed to go, who has id true Christianity, with the proper evidence of it, laid be-e him, and has in any tolerable measure considered them. or I would not be mistaken to comprehend all who have er heard of it; because it seems evident, that, in many untries called Christian, neither Christianity, nor its evince, are fairly laid before men. And in places where both e, there appear to be some who have very little attended to her, and who reject Christianity with a scorn proportionate their inattention; and yet are by no means without underanding in other matters. Now it has been shown, that a seous apprehension that Christianity may be true, lays perns under the strictest obligations of a serious regard to it, roughout the whole of their life; a regard not the same actly, but in many respects nearly the same with what a ll conviction of its truth would lay them under. *Lastly*, it ill appear, that blasphemy and profaneness, I mean with gard to Christianity, are absolutely without excuse. For ere is no temptation to it, but from the wantonness of vanity mirth; and these, considering the infinite importance of e subject, are no such temptations as to afford any excuse r it. If this be a just account of things, and yet men can on to vilify or disregard Christianity, which is to talk and t as if they had a demonstration of its falsehood; there is reason to think they would alter their behaviour to any rpose, though there were a demonstration of its truth.

DISSERTATION I.

OF PERSONAL IDENTITY.

WHETHER we are to live in a future state, as it is the most important question which can possibly be asked, so it is the most intelligible one which can be expressed in language. Yet strange perplexities have been raised about the meaning of that identity, or sameness of person, which is implied in the notion of our living now and hereafter, or in any two successive moments. And the solution of these difficulties hath been stranger than the difficulties themselves. For, personal identity has been explained so by some, as to render the inquiry concerning a future life of no consequence at all to us, the persons who are making it. And though few men can be misled by such subtleties, yet it may be proper a little to consider them.

Now, when it is asked wherein personal identity consists, the answer should be the same as if it were asked, wherein consists similitude or equality; that all attempts to define, would but perplex it. Yet there is no difficulty at all in ascertaining the idea. For as, upon two triangles being compared or viewed together, there arises to the mind the idea of similitude; or upon twice two and four, the idea of equality; so likewise, upon comparing the consciousness of one's self, or one's own existence in any two moments, there as immediately arises to the mind the idea of personal identity. And as the two former comparisons not only give the idea of similitude and equality, but also shows us, that two triangles are like, and twice two and four are equal; so the latter comparison not only gives us the idea of personal identity, but also shows us the identity of ourselves in those two moments; the present, suppose, and that immediately past; or the present, and that a month, a year, or twenty years past. Or in other words, by reflecting upon that which is myself now

and that which was myself twenty years ago, I discern they are not two, but one and the same self.

But though consciousness of what is past does thus ascertain our personal identity to ourselves, yet, to say that it makes personal identity, or is necessary to our being the same persons, is to say, that a person has not existed a single moment, nor done one action, but what he can remember; indeed none but what he reflects upon. And one should really think it self-evident, that consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity, any more than knowledge, in any other case, can constitute truth, which it presupposes.

This wonderful mistake may possibly have arisen from hence, that to be endued with consciousness, is inseparable from the idea of a person, or intelligent being. For, this might be expressed inaccurately thus,—that consciousness makes personality; and from hence it might be concluded to make personal identity. But though present consciousness of what we at present do and feel, is necessary to our being the persons we now are; yet present consciousness of past actions, or feelings, is not necessary to our being the same persons who performed those actions, or had those feelings.

The inquiry, what makes vegetables the same in the common acceptation of the word, does not appear to have any relation to this of personal identity; because the word *same*, when applied to them and to persons, is not only applied to different subjects, but it is also used in different senses. For when a man swears to the same tree, as having stood fifty years in the same place, he means only the same as to all the purposes of property and uses of common life, and not that the tree has been all that time the same in the strict philosophical sense of the word. For he does not know whether any one particle of the present tree be the same with any one particle of the tree which stood in the same place fifty years ago. And if they have not one common particle of matter, they cannot be the same tree, in the proper philosophic sense of the word *same*; it being evidently a contradiction in terms, to say they are, when no part of their substance, and no one of their properties, is the same; no part of their substance, by the supposition; no one of their properties, because it is allowed that the same property cannot be transferred from one substance to another. And therefore, when we say the identity or sameness of a plant consists in a continuation of the same life communicated under the same organization, to a

number of particles of matter, whether the same or not, the word *same*, when applied to life and to organization, cannot possibly be understood to signify, what it signifies in this very sentence, when applied to matter. In a loose and popular sense, then, the life, and the organization, and the plant, are justly said to be the same, notwithstanding the perpetual change of the parts. But in a strict and philosophical manner of speech, no man, no being, no mode of being, nor any thing, can be the same with that, with which it hath indeed nothing the same. Now, sameness is used in this latter sense when applied to persons. The identity of these, therefore, cannot subsist with diversity of substance.

The thing here considered, and demonstratively, as I think, determined, is proposed by Mr. Locke in these words, *Whether it*, i. e. the same self or person, *be the same identical substance?* And he has suggested what is a much better answer to the question than that which he gives it in form. For he defines person, *a thinking intelligent being*, &c. and personal identity *the sameness of a rational being*.* The question then is, whether the same rational being is the same substance; which needs no answer, because being and substance, in this place, stand for the same idea. The ground of the doubt, whether the same person be the same substance is said to be this; that the consciousness of our own existence in youth and in old age, or in any two joint successive moments, is not *the same individual action*,† i. e. not the same consciousness, but different successive consciousnesses. Now it is strange that this should have occasioned such perplexities. For it is surely conceivable, that a person may have a capacity of knowing some object or other to be the same now, which it was when he contemplated it formerly; yet, in this case, where, by the supposition, the object is perceived to be the same, the perception of it in any two moments cannot be one and the same perception. And thus, though the successive consciousnesses which we have of our own existence are not the same, yet are they consciousnesses of one and the same thing or object; of the same person, self, or living agent. The person, of whose existence the consciousness is felt now, and was felt an hour or a year ago, is discerned to be, not two persons, but one and the same person; and therefore is one and the same.

Mr. Locke's observations upon this subject appear hasty;

* Locke's Works, vol. i. p. 146. † Locke, p. 146, 147.

and he seems to profess himself dissatisfied with suppositions, which he has made relating to it.* But some of those hasty observations have been carried to a strange length by others; whose notion, when traced and examined to the bottom, amounts, I think, to this:† 'That personality is not a permanent, but a transient thing: that it lives and dies, begins and ends, continually: that no one can any more remain one and the same person two moments together, than two successive moments can be one and the same moment: that our substance is indeed continually changing; but whether this be so or not, is, it seems, nothing to the purpose; since it is not substance, but consciousness alone, which constitutes personality; which consciousness, being successive, cannot be the same in any two moments, nor consequently the personality constituted by it.' And from hence it must follow, that it is a fallacy upon ourselves, to charge our present selves with any thing we did, or to imagine our present selves interested in any thing which befell us yesterday, or that our present self will be interested in what will befall us to-morrow; since our present self is not, in reality, the same with the self of yesterday, but another like self or person coming in its room, and mistaken for it; to which another self will succeed to-morrow. This, I say, must follow: for if the self or person of to-day, and that of to-morrow, are not the same, but only like persons, the person of to-day is really no more interested in what will befall the person of to-morrow, than in what will befall any other person. It may be thought, perhaps, that this is not a just representation of the opinion we are speaking of; because those who maintain it allow, that a person is the same as far back as his remembrance reaches. And, indeed, they do use the words, *identity* and *same* person. Nor will language permit these words to be laid aside: since if they were, there must be, I know not what, ridiculous periphrasis substituted in the room of them. But they cannot, consistently with themselves, mean, that the person is really the same. For it is self-evident, that the personality cannot be really the same, if, as they expressly assert, that in which it consists is not the same. And as, consistently with themselves, they cannot, so, I think, it appears they do not, mean, that the person is *really* the same, but only that he is so in a fictitious sense: in such a sense only as they assert; for this

* Locke, p. 152.

† See an answer to Dr. Clarke's third defence of his letter to Mr. Dodwell, 2d edit. p. 44, 56, &c.

they do assert, that any number of persons whatever may be the same person. The bare unfolding this notion, and laying it thus naked and open, seems the best confutation of it. However, since great stress is said to be put upon it, I add the following things:

First, This notion is absolutely contradictory to that certain conviction, which necessarily, and every moment, rises within us, when we turn our thoughts upon ourselves; when we reflect upon what is past, and look forward upon what is to come. All imagination of a daily change of that living agent which each man calls himself, for another, or of any such change throughout our whole present life, is entirely borne down by our natural sense of things. Nor is it possible for a person in his wits to alter his conduct, with regard to his health or affairs, from a suspicion, that though he should live to-morrow, he should not, however, be the same person he is to-day. And yet, if it be reasonable to act, with respect to a future life, upon this notion, that personality is transient; it is reasonable to act upon it, with respect to the present. Here then is a notion equally applicable to religion and to our temporal concerns; and every one sees and feels the inexpressible absurdity of it in the latter case. If, therefore, any can take up with it in the former, this cannot proceed from the reason of the thing, but must be owing to an inward unfairness, and secret corruption of heart.

Secondly, It is not an idea, or abstract notion, or quality, but a being only which is capable of life and action, of happiness and misery. Now all beings confessedly continue the same, during the whole time of their existence. Consider then a living being now existing, and which has existed for any time alive: this living being must have done and suffered and enjoyed, what it has done and suffered and enjoyed formerly, (this living being, I say, and not another,) as really as it does and suffers and enjoys, what it does and suffers and enjoys this instant. All these successive actions, enjoyments, and sufferings, are actions, enjoyments, and sufferings, of the same living being. And they are so, prior to all consideration of its remembering or forgetting; since remembering or forgetting can make no alteration in the truth of past matter of fact. And suppose this being endued with limited powers of knowledge and memory, there is no more difficulty in conceiving it to have a power of knowing itself to be the same living being which it was some time ago, of remembering *some of* its actions, sufferings, and enjoyments, and forgetting

others, than in conceiving it to know, or remember, or forget any thing else.

Thirdly, Every person is conscious, that he is now the same person or self he was, as far back as his remembrance reaches; since, when any one reflects upon a past action of his own, he is just as certain of the person who did that action, namely himself, the person who now reflects upon it, as he is certain that the action was at all done. Nay, very often a person's assurance of an action having been done, of which he is absolutely assured, arises wholly from the consciousness that he himself did it. And this he, person, or self, must either be a substance, or the property of some substance. If he, if person, be a substance; then consciousness that he is the same person, is consciousness that he is the same substance. If the person, or he, be the property of a substance; still consciousness that he is the same property, is as certain a proof that his substance remains the same, as consciousness that he remains the same substance would be; since the same property cannot be transferred from one substance to another.

But though we are thus certain that we are the same agents, living beings, or substances, now, which we were as far back as our remembrance reaches; yet it is asked, whether we may not possibly be deceived in it? And this question may be asked at the end of any demonstration whatever; because it is a question concerning the truth of perception by memory. And he who can doubt, whether perception by memory can in this case be depended upon, may doubt also, whether perception by deduction and reasoning, which also include memory, or, indeed, whether intuitive perception can. Here then we can go no farther. For it is ridiculous to attempt to prove the truth of those perceptions, whose truth we can no otherwise prove, than by other perceptions of exactly the same kind with them, and which there is just the same ground to suspect; or to attempt to prove the truth of our faculties, which can no otherwise be proved, than by the use or means of those very suspected faculties themselves.

DISSERTATION II.

OF THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.

THAT which renders beings capable of moral governr is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of pe tion and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and ated by various instincts and propensions: so also are But, additional to this, we have a capacity of reflecting actions and characters, and making them an object to thoughts; and on doing this, we naturally and unavoid approve some actions, under the peculiar view of their b virtuous and of good desert; and disapprove others, as vi and of ill desert. That we have this moral approving disapproving* faculty, is certain from our experiencing ourselves, and recognising it in each other. It appears our exercising it unavoidably, in the approbation and di probation even of feigned characters: from the words, r and wrong, odious and amiable, base and worthy, with n others of like signification in all languages, applied to act and characters: from the many written systems of m which suppose it; since it cannot be imagined, that all t authors, throughout all these treatises, had absolutely meaning at all to their words, or a meaning merely chir

* This way of speaking is taken from Epictetus,† and is made u as seeming the most full, and least liable to cavil. And the more culty may be understood to have these two epithets, δοκιμαστικη αποδοκιμαστικη, upon a double account; because, upon a survey o tions, whether before or after they are done, it determines them t good or evil; and also because it determines itself to be the guide o tion and of life, in contradistinction from all other faculties, or natural ciples of action: in the very same manner, as speculative reason di and naturally judges of speculative truth and falsehood; and, at same time, is attended with a consciousness upon *reflection*, that natural right to judge of them belongs to it.

† Arr. Epict. lib. i. cap. 1.

cal: from our natural sense of gratitude, which implies a distinction between merely being the instrument of good, and intending it: from the like distinction, every one makes, between injury and mere harm, which Hobbes says, is peculiar to mankind; and between injury and just punishment, a distinction plainly natural, prior to the consideration of human laws. It is manifest, great part of common language, and of common behaviour over the world, is formed upon supposition of such a moral faculty; whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason; whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding, or as a perception of the heart, or, which seems the truth, as including both. Nor is it at all doubtful in the general, what course of action this faculty, or practical discerning power within us, approves, and what it disapproves. For, as much as it has been disputed wherein virtue consists, or whatever ground for doubt there may be about particulars, yet, in general, there is in reality a universally acknowledged standard of it. It is that, which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public; it is that, which every man you meet, puts on the show of; it is that, which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions, over the face of the earth, make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of upon mankind; namely, justice, veracity, and regard to common good. It being manifest then, in general, that we have such a faculty or discernment as this, it may be of use to remark some things, more distinctly concerning it.

First, It ought to be observed, that the object of this faculty is actions,* comprehending under that name, active or practical principles; those principles from which men would act, if occasions and circumstances gave them power; and which, when fixed and habitual in any person, we call, his character. It does not appear, that brutes have the least reflex sense of actions, as distinguished from events; or that will and design, which constitute the very nature of actions as such, are at all an object to their perception. But to ours they are; and they are the object, and the only one, of the approving and disapproving faculty. Acting, conduct, behaviour, abstracted from all regard to what is, in fact and event, the consequence of it, is itself the natural object of the moral discernment, as speculative truth and falsehood is of

* *ουδε ἡ αρητη και κακια—εν πεισει, αλλα ενεργεια.* M. Anton. l. 9. 16. Virtutis laus omnis in actione consistit. Cic. Off. l. 1. c. 6.

speculative reason. Intention of such and such consequ
indeed, is always included; for it is part of the action
but though the intended good or bad consequences
follow, we have exactly the same sense of the actio
they did. In like manner, we think well or ill of char
abstracted from all consideration of the good or the evil,
persons of such characters have it actually in their po
do. We never, in the moral way, applaud or blame
ourselves or others, for what we enjoy or what we suf
for having impressions made upon us which we consi
altogether out of our power; but only for what we
would have done, had it been in our power; or for wh
leave undone which we might have done, or would ha
undone though we could have done it.

Secondly, Our sense or discernment of actions, as m
good or evil, implies in it a sense or discernment of the
good or ill desert. It may be difficult to explain this p
tion, so as to answer all the questions which may be
concerning it; but every one speaks of such and such a
as deserving punishment; and it is not, I suppose, pret
that they have absolutely no meaning at all to the e
sion. Now, the meaning plainly is, not that we conc
for the good of society, that the doer of such actions,
be made to suffer. For if unhappily it were resolved,
man who, by some innocent action was infected wi
plague, should be left to perish, lest, by other people c
near him, the infection should spread; no one would s
deserved this treatment. Innocence and ill desert are
sistent ideas. Ill desert always supposes guilt; and
be not part of the other, yet they are evidently and nat
connected in our mind. The sight of a man in misery
our compassion towards him; and, if this misery be in
on him by another, our indignation against the author
But when we are informed, that the sufferer is a villai
is punished only for his treachery or cruelty; our comp
exceedingly lessens, and, in many instances, our indig
wholly subsides. Now, what produces this effect, is th
ception of that in the sufferer, which we call ill desert.
considering then, or viewing together, our notion of vi
that of misery, there results a third, that of ill desert.
thus there is in human creatures an association of th
ideas, natural and moral evil, wickedness and punis
If this association were merely artificial or accidental, i
nothing; but being most unquestionably natural, it

ncerns us to attend to it, instead of endeavoring to explain away.

It may be observed farther, concerning our perception of od and of ill desert, that the former is very weak with spect to common instances of virtue. One reason of which ay be, that it does not appear to a spectator, how far such stances of virtue proceed from a virtuous principle, or in hat degree this principle is prevalent; since a very weak gard to virtue may be sufficient to make men act well in any common instances. And on the other hand, our perption of ill desert in vicious actions lessens, in proportion to e temptations men are thought to have had to such vices. or, vice in human creatures consisting chiefly in the absence want of the virtuous principle, though a man be overcome, ppose, by tortures, it does not from thence appear, to what gree the virtuous principle was wanting. All that appears, that he had it not in such a degree, as to prevail over the mptation; but possibly he had it in a degree, which would ave rendered him proof against common temptations.

Thirdly, Our perception of vice and ill deserts arises from, nd is the result of, a comparison of actions with the nature nd capacities of the agent. For, the mere neglect of doing hat we ought to do, would, in many cases, be determined by ll men to be in the highest degree vicious. And this deterination must arise from such comparison, and be the result it; because such neglect would not be vicious in creatures other natures and capacities, as brutes. And it is the same lso with respect to positive vices, or such as consist in doing hat we ought not. For, every one has a different sense of arm done by an idiot, madman, or child, and by one of mature nd common understanding; though the action of both, cluding the intention, which is part of the action, be the ame: as it may be, since idiots and madmen, as well as hildren, are capable, not only of doing mischief, but also of tending it. Now, this difference must arise from somewhat scerned in the nature or capacities of one, which renders the ction vicious; and the want of which in the other, renders he same action innocent, or less vicious: and this plainly pposes a comparison, whether reflected upon or not, between he action and capacities of the agent, previous to our deterining an action to be vicious. And hence arises a proper pplication of the epithets, incongruous, unsuitable, disproortionate, unfit, to actions which our moral faculty determines o be vicious.

Fourthly, It deserves to be considered, whether men are more at liberty, in point of morals, to make themselves miserable without reason, than to make other people so; or absolutely to neglect their own greater good, for the sake of a present lesser gratification, than they are to neglect the good of others, whom nature has committed to their care. It should seem, that a due concern about our own interest or happiness, and a reasonable endeavor to secure and promote it, which is, I think, very much the meaning of the word *prudence* in our language; it should seem, that this is virtue, and the contrary behaviour faulty and blameable: since, upon the calmest way of reflection, we approve of the first, and condemn the other conduct, both in ourselves and others. This approbation and disapprobation are altogether different from mere desire of our own, or of their happiness, and from sorrow upon missing it. For the object or occasion of this last kind of perception, is satisfaction or uneasiness; whereas the object of the first is active behaviour. In one case, what our thoughts fix upon is our condition; in the other, our conduct. It is true, indeed, that nature has not given us so sensible a disapprobation of imprudence and folly, either in *ourselves* or *others*, as of falsehood, injustice, and cruelty; I suppose, because that constant habitual sense of private interest and good, which we always carry about with us, renders such sensible disapprobation less necessary, less wanting, to keep us from imprudently neglecting our own happiness, and foolishly injuring ourselves, than it is necessary and wanting to keep us from injuring others, to whose good we cannot have so strong and constant a regard; and also, because imprudence and folly, appearing to bring its own punishment, more immediately and constantly than injurious behaviour, it less needs the additional punishment which would be inflicted upon it by others, had they the same sensible indignation against it as against injustice, and fraud, and cruelty. Besides, unhappiness being in itself the natural object of compassion, the unhappiness which people bring upon themselves, though it be wilfully, excites in us some pity for them; and this, of course, lessens our displeasure against them. But still it is a matter of experience, that we are formed so as to reflect very severely upon the greater instances of imprudent neglect and foolish rashness, both in ourselves and others. In instances of this kind, men often say of themselves with remorse, and of others with some indignation, that they deserve to suffer such calamities, because they brought them upon themselves.

and would not take warning. Particularly when persons come to poverty and distress by a long course of extravagance, and after frequent admonitions, though without falsehood or injustice; we plainly do not regard such people as like objects of compassion, with those who are brought into the same condition by unavoidable accidents. From these things it appears, that prudence is a species of virtue, and folly of vice: meaning by *folly*, somewhat quite different from mere incapacity; a thoughtless want of that regard and attention to our own happiness, which we had capacity for. And this the word properly includes, and, as it seems, in its usual acceptation; for we scarce apply it to brute creatures.

However, if any person be disposed to dispute the matter, I shall very willingly give him up the words *virtue* and *vice*, as not applicable to prudence and folly; but must beg leave to insist, that the faculty within us, which is the judge of actions, approves of prudent actions and disapproves imprudent ones; I say, prudent and imprudent *actions* as such, and considered distinctly from the happiness or misery which they occasion. And by the way, this observation may help to determine, what justness there is in that objection against religion, that it teaches us to be interested and selfish.

Fifthly, Without inquiring how far, and in what sense, virtue is resolvable into benevolence, and vice into the want of it; it may be proper to observe, that benevolence, and the want of it, singly considered, are in no sort the whole of virtue and vice. For if this were the case, in the review of one's own character, or that of others, our moral understanding and moral sense would be indifferent to every thing, but the degrees in which benevolence prevailed, and the degrees in which it was wanting. That is, we should never approve of benevolence to some persons rather than to others, nor disapprove injustice and falsehood upon any other account, than merely as an overbalance of happiness was foreseen likely to be produced by the first, and of misery by the second. But now, on the contrary, suppose two men competitors for any thing whatever, which would be of equal advantage to each of them; though nothing indeed would be more impertinent, than for a stranger to busy himself to get one of them preferred to the other; yet such endeavor would be virtue, in behalf of a friend or benefactor, abstracted from all consideration of distant consequences: as that example of gratitude, and the cultivation of friendship, would be of general good to the world. Again, suppose one man should, by fraud or violence

take from another the fruit of his labor with intent to give it to a third, who, he thought, would have as much pleasure from it as would balance the pleasure which the first possessor would have had in the enjoyment, and his vexation in the loss of it: suppose also, that no bad consequences would follow; yet such an action would surely be vicious. Nay, farther, were treachery, violence, and injustice, no otherwise vicious, than as foreseen likely to produce an overbalance of misery to society; then, if in any case a man could procure to himself as great advantage by an act of injustice, as the whole foreseen inconvenience, likely to be brought upon others by it, would amount to, such a piece of injustice would not be faulty or vicious at all; because it would be no more than, in any other case, for a man to prefer his own satisfaction to another's in equal degrees. The fact then appears to be, that we are constituted so as to condemn falsehood, unprovoked violence, injustice, and to approve of benevolence to some preferably to others, abstracted from all consideration which conduct is likeliest to produce an overbalance of happiness or misery. And therefore, were the author of nature to propose nothing to himself as an end but the production of happiness, were his moral character merely that of benevolence; yet ours is not so. Upon that supposition, indeed, the only reason of his giving us the above-mentioned approbation of benevolence to some persons rather than to others, and disapprobation of falsehood, unprovoked violence, and injustice, must be, that he foresaw this constitution of our nature would produce more happiness, than forming us with a temper of mere general benevolence. But still, since this is our constitution, falsehood, violence, injustice, must be vice in us, and benevolence to some preferably to others, virtue, abstracted from all consideration of the overbalance of evil or good which they may appear likely to produce.

Now, if human creatures are endued with such a moral nature as we have been explaining, or with a moral faculty the natural object of which is actions; moral government must consist in rendering them happy and unhappy, in rewarding and punishing them, as they follow, neglect, or depart from, the moral rule of action interwoven in their nature, or suggested and enforced by this moral faculty;* in rewarding and punishing them upon account of their so doing.

I am not sensible that I have, in this fifth observation, contradicted what any author designed to assert. But some of

* Part ii. Chap. 6.

great and distinguished merit have, I think, expressed themselves in a manner, which may occasion some danger to careless readers, of imagining the whole of virtue to consist in singly aiming, according to the best of their judgment, at promoting the happiness of mankind in the present state; and the whole of vice, in doing what they foresee, or might foresee, is likely to produce an overbalance of unhappiness in it; than which mistakes, none can be conceived more terrible. For it is certain, that some of the most shocking instances of injustice, adultery, murder, perjury, and even of persecution, may, in many supposable cases, not have the appearance of being likely to produce an overbalance of misery in the present state; perhaps sometimes may have the contrary appearance. For this reflection might easily be carried on; but I forbear.——The happiness of the world is the concern of Him, who is the Lord and the proprietor of it; nor do we know what we are about, when we endeavor to promote the good of mankind in any ways but those which he has directed; that is, indeed, in all ways not contrary to veracity and justice. I speak thus upon supposition of persons really endeavoring, in some sort, to do good without regard to these. But the truth seems to be, that such supposed endeavors proceed, almost always, from ambition, the spirit of party, or some indirect principle, concealed perhaps in great measure from persons themselves. And though it is our business and our duty to endeavor, within the bounds of veracity and justice, to contribute to the ease, convenience, and even cheerfulness and diversion of our fellow-creatures; yet, from our short views, it is greatly uncertain whether this endeavor will, in particular instances, produce an overbalance of happiness upon the whole; since so many and distant things must come into the account. And that which makes it our duty, is, that there is some appearance that it will, and no positive appearance sufficient to balance this, on the contrary side; and also, that such benevolent endeavor is a cultivation of that most excellent of all virtuous principles, the active principle of benevolence.

However, though veracity, as well as justice, is to be our rule of life, it must be added, otherwise a snare will be laid in the way of some plain men, that the use of common forms of speech generally understood, cannot be falsehood; and, in general, that there can be no designed falsehood without designing to deceive. It must likewise be observed, that, in numberless cases, a man may be under the strictest obligations

to what he foresees will deceive, without his intending it. It is impossible not to foresee, that the words and actic men in different ranks and employments, and of different cations, will perpetually be mistaken by each other; a cannot but be so, whilst they will judge with the utmost lessness, as they daily do, of what they are not, per enough informed to be competent judges of, even though considered it with great attention.

C McKee, Joseph, 1805-1863

QUESTIONS

FOR THE

EXAMINATION OF STUDENTS ON BUTLER'S ANALOGY OF NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

INTRODUCTION.

1. Distinction between probable and demonstrative evidence.
2. Why cannot we say, upon one slight presumption, that a thing is probably true?
3. Still, how is it shown, that the slightest possible presumption partakes of the nature of probability?
4. How is that which constitutes probability expressed? and why?
5. What is the use of probability in the discussion of questions where more satisfactory evidence cannot be had?
6. Do men, generally speaking, consider the analogical method of reasoning just, natural, and conclusive? For example:
7. To what conclusion, from analogy, did Origen come, as to the objections urged against the Scriptures? and what does the author say in addition?
8. How does the author propose to apply the principles of analogy to the doctrines of natural and revealed religion?
9. Why does he select this mode of reasoning?
10. What is the legitimate tendency of dreamy speculations as to how the world might possibly have been framed otherwise than it is?
11. What do such extravagant and foolish trains of conclusions show, as to such speculations?
12. How do they show this?
13. Instead, therefore, of this idle and not very innocent way of forming imaginary models of a world, how ought we to study the natural and moral constitution of the world?
14. What is said of the analogy here to be considered?
15. State what the Divine government of the world, as implied in the notion of religion in general, and of Christianity, comprehends?
16. Now, what is the design of the following treatise?

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

1. Difficulties concerning personal identity.
 Personal identity a complex term. Its constituents.
2. What is the object of this chapter?
3. What general law in our species obtains, and which affords a high presumption in favor of a future life?
4. Does this law hold good in other races of animated life?
5. What is the conclusion from this law of nature?
6. What is a law of nature? What is consciousness?
7. Of what is the fact, that we have capacities of pleasure or pain before death, a presumption? and why?
8. What is meant by faith in the order of nature?
9. Why do we believe the course of the world will be as it always has been?
10. Suppose men knew that death was not the destruction of the faculties of action and perception, would they fear any other power or event would be? Why not?
11. Now then, from what two causes only can we have apprehensions that death is the destruction of our living powers?
12. There can be no apprehension *from the reason of the thing:* Why not?
13. Do we know on what the play of the *living powers* depends?
14. How do you show these powers may exist when they are not exercised?
15. Hence, since we do not know on what the play of the living powers depends, and since we do know these powers may be suspended; may exist when there is no present capacity for exercising them, what is our conclusion *as to this apprehension from the reason of the thing?*
16. Can there be any apprehension from the analogy of nature that death is the destruction of living powers? Prove this.
17. In fact, of what is our knowing that animals had these powers up to the very period of the event we call death, a presumption?
18. By what facts from analogy is this confirmed?
19. What is the hypothesis, on which all presumption that death is the destruction of living beings, founded?
20. What is the argument, from consciousness, for the oneness and indivisibility of the living agent—the I, that which thinks, wills, acts?
21. State the hypothesis offered to prove the unity of the living agent.
22. What is the deduction from this?

23. Now then, if the living being each calls I, is a single being, and indivisible, what follows as to our organized bodies?
24. It is replied: It is inconceivable how matter which is no part of us, may be appropriated to us as our present bodies are. How do you meet this objection?
25. Now, what is the conclusion from all this?
26. State some of the facts which prove the absolute oneness of the living agent.
27. Now, what do these facts teach?
28. The atomic elements of matter incapable of being dissolved by any natural power.
29. Now, what follows from the fact that we are sometimes closely related to, and interested in, certain systems of matter, as the flesh and bones, and then cease to be at all related to them, the living agents, ourselves, being all the while the same—undestroyed and entire?
30. But it may be said the cases are not parallel; for the alienation in the one case is gradual, and in the other more at once: how do you answer the objection?
31. After all, what does the relation which a person bears to those parts of his body to which he is most nearly related, apparently amount?
32. How may the same be shown from a consideration of the body, as consisting of organs of motion and perception?
33. Of what are all instruments for assisting the reach and strength of vision and hearing, illustrations, when taken in connection with this discussion?
34. How then may both the eye and the optical instrument be regarded? and what is the conclusion from this?
35. Is it meant that the whole apparatus of vision or of perception can be traced up to the living power of seeing and perceiving? What then?
36. By what other way is it shown that the organs of sense are not percipients?
37. How may the same be shown by our power of moving, or directing motion by the will and choice?
38. Does the power, then, of moving or directing themselves reside in the limbs?
39. How may the same, viz., the mind's independency of the body, be shown by the determinations of the will?
40. Now, what is the conclusion from the foregoing?
41. It is objected, that these observations are equally applicable to brutes, making them immortal, and capable of everlasting happiness: how do you answer the objection?
42. Does the natural immortality of brutes imply that they are endowed with any latent capacities of a rational or moral nature?
43. In what are the difficulties as to how brutes shall be disposed of founded? and to what does this objection amount?
44. What follows from the fact that our present powers of reason,

imagination, and memory, do not depend on our material body, as perception does on our organs of sense?

45. What are the two states of life and perception in which human creatures at present exist?
46. Now, how do you show that nothing dissolvable by death is necessary to the living being after ideas are gained?
47. What other facts show that the relation of this gross body to the reflecting being is apparently no way necessary to thinking; nor to our intellectual enjoyments and sufferings: and that there seems to be no reason to conclude that its dissolution or alienation by death will be the destruction of the rational and perceptive powers?
48. How is it shown that death, instead of being the discontinuance of these powers, may be but another birth, the beginning of another life, and which is but the continuation of the present, as the present is so of *that* antecedent to birth?
49. What are the grounds for believing that death may but serve to introduce us to a higher and more enlarged state of life?
50. Were we certain that death would suspend all our active and perceptive powers, would that prove it destroys them?
51. But may it not be argued that the decay of vegetables and living beings is analogous, and hence a presumption that death is their destruction?
52. What then is the conclusion at which we arrive on this question, when we confine ourselves to facts; to the analogies of things which we know, and understand?
53. What is the presumption as to the character of the new state after the event we call death, and how may its advantages be bestowed?
54. What is the meaning of the term *natural?* What follows from this?
55. Recapitulate the arguments to show that death is not the destruction of living agents:—That it is not the destruction of their *present* powers of reflection; and that suspension of these powers is not their destruction?

CHAPTER II.

1. What is the subject of the second chapter of Butler's Analogy?
2. Why is the question about a future life so impressive and solemn?
3. What is it that makes it particularly so?
4. Apart from this consideration, would the subject be one of much interest?
5. Now, if there be, from analogy, ground to suppose our future interests connected with our present behavior, is there not

reason for the most active and earnest solicitude to secure those interests?

What is the fact as to our happiness or suffering in the present state?

How do you show this?

Are all our sufferings, however, owing to our own follies?

Answer the question, why the Author of nature does not make his creatures happy without the instrumentality of their own actions, and so prevent their bringing suffering on themselves?

What is the language of universal experience on this subject?

What is meant when it is said, all this is to be ascribed to the course of nature?

What is meant by the assertion that good and bad consequences are the appointments of the Author of nature?

What general fact shows that we are under a government of rewards and punishments?

What is the proper formal notion of such a government?

Is it material to the argument, in any way, whether the pleasure or pain, which thus follows upon our behavior, be owing to the *immediate action* of the Creator, or part of the great plan of things? Why not?

How is it shown from the doctrine of final causes we are under such a government?

What is the true conception of the government which the Author of nature exercises over us?

What is our conclusion then from the analogy of nature as to this government?

MEN CHIEFLY OBJECT TO DIVINE PUNISHMENT.

What circumstances are there in the natural course of punishments now, analogous to what religion teaches concerning a future state of punishment?

What facts connected with these punishments particularly deserve attention?

For example?

Example from habits contracted in early life?

How is it shown that the natural course of things affords opportunities for procuring advantages we cannot procure *when we please*, nor even recall opportunities *we have neglected?*

How may the same principle be illustrated by what obtains in courses of folly and extravagance?

And furthermore, do not neglects from inconsiderateness—want of attention, not looking about us, to see what we have to do, often bring dreadful consequences, as much so as active misbehavior?

26. What is the fact as to civil governments, are their punishments also natural?
27. Now show *how* these civil punishments are analogous to what religion teaches concerning the future punishment of the wicked?
28. Quote the Scripture passages in proof of this, and draw the conclusion?
29. In fact, on a sober review of the proofs of a future state of rewards and punishments, what circumstances do give to the mind its most impressive apprehensions of punishment?
30. Does Butler mean to say, that men are punished uniformly *here*, according to their misbehavior?
31. What are the closing reflections of the chapter?
32. Recapitulate the argument showing that we are under the government of God by rewards and punishments?

CHAPTER III.

1. Of what does the third chapter of Butler's Analogy treat?
2. What do the manifold appearances of design and of final causes in the constitution of the world prove?
3. What do the particular final causes of the distribution of pleasure and pain among human beings prove?
4. Does this alone prove that the government of the world is a moral government?
5. What is the right idea of a moral government?
6. In what does the perfection of moral government consist?
7. What is the opinion some entertain of the moral character of the Author of nature?
8. What is meant by simple, absolute benevolence?
9. And what would the attributes of veracity and justice be on this supposition? What does Butler say of this opinion?
10. May there not be beings in the universe to whom the Author of nature does manifest himself as infinite absolute benevolence?
11. Is that the question here?
12. Is the government of the present state, taken alone, the perfection of moral government? Is there nothing in it then truly moral?
13. What is the object of this third chapter?
14. For example: what might be mentioned as an impressive instance of moral government established in nature?
15. Is this, however, a fact? Are there no exceptions to the happiness of virtue: Is virtue, on the whole, happier than vice in the present world?
16. Is there any difficulty as to the question whether God governs

the world by rewards and punishments according to settled rules of distribution?

. What is the difficulty then?

. Now then, this is the teaching of religion: does it, however, harmonize with the analogy of things?

. What facts show that the world is governed by fixed general laws—that happiness and misery result from, or are instances of a right constitution of nature?

. What facts more plainly prove the same, viz., that we are under some sort of moral government?

. What is the voice of nature as to vicious actions?

. Why should the vices of falsehood, injustice, and cruelty be punished?

. Now what follows from the fact that society punishes such vices, and sometimes rewards virtues?

. How do you answer the objection that good actions are often punished as in the case of persecution, and ill actions are often rewarded?

. What is the legitimate conclusion from this?

. Of what then is the fact that virtue, *as such*, is rewarded, and vice, *as such*, is punished in the *natural course of things*, a proof?

. What distinction is necessary to be made, so as to see this clearly?

. Why is this distinction necessary?

. How do you illustrate this distinction between the action and the morality of the action?

. Now what proves that virtue, *as such*, procures advantages, and that vice, *as such*, occasions great inconveniences?

. How is this argument strengthened by the behavior of all honest and good men, towards honest and good men, *as such*?

. Does this obtain in the affairs of life generally: *do even men who have little love of virtue themselves reverence it in others?*

. For example: What similar illustration may be given from the great revolutions that figure in history?

. In fact, on what are all correct ideas of retaliation and resentment, or of gratitude, and a disposition to return good offices founded?

. What instances have we in domestic government illustrative of the same fact?

. How do you show that, though civil governments punish actions only, because they are prejudicial to society, and without regard to their immorality, yet the sense of the immorality of such actions is, in some degree, felt by all?

. On the whole then, what does the sense of well-doing; presages of conscience, love of good characters and dislike of bad characters; honor, shame, &c., in themselves, considered, and in their effects show?

38. Indeed, of what may the fact, that we are endowed with a moral nature, be regarded as a proof?
39. Taken together, what do these two facts prove?
40. But let us ask more minutely, why virtue as such, and vice as such, are rewarded and punished invariably?
41. What two facts prove this satisfactorily?
42. Is there any such thing as vice being approbated *as such*?
43. What is the conclusion from this?
44. Is this a fact: is it a truth of daily experience?
45. In what other way may personal merit and demerit, happiness and misery, be distributed in the natural course of things?
46. If the world be governed by general laws, must not the righteous sometimes suffer, and the vicious sometimes be rewarded?
47. Does this, however, shake our faith, that God is on the side of virtue and opposed to vice?
48. Why not?
49. Can it be said, that since virtuous actions are sometimes punished, and vicious actions sometimes rewarded, that nature intended it to be so?
50. Why not?
51. To what then does this declaration, that nature is on the side of virtue and opposed to vice, amount?
52. Now, how far may every man be said to be on the side of the Divine administration, and what is the result on the man's moral hopes?
53. By what is this sense of security and hope of something further still, by the doer of the right, confirmed?
54. How do you show these tendencies are such, that good men ought to be rewarded, and bad men punished *more as such*, than they are?
55. It is acknowledged these tendencies are obvious as to individuals: but is it equally obvious, that power in a society controlled by virtue, naturally increases and necessarily tends to prevail over power not under the direction of virtue?
56. What is the supposition to illustrate the principle, that length of time, and proper scope for reason to exert itself, may be absolutely necessary for power though joined with reason, to prevail over opposite power though merely brutal?
57. Further still, are there not instances, in which brutes, owing to their incapability of foreseeing the dangers of certain attempts, have succeeded in these attempts, and instances of reason and real prudence preventing men's undertaking what they might have succeeded in by a lucky rashness?
58. Nay, may there not be some globes where possibly the irrational have the superiority over the rational animals?
59. Now suppose the rational animals of such globes wholly at variance, envious, treacherous, unjust, utterly disunited,

while the irrational were firmly united by interest, what would be the opinion one would likely form of the origin of this state of things?

What is the analogy then as to the power of virtue in a society?

How does this tendency of the power of virtue in a society manifest itself?

Now suppose the invisible world and its dispensations analogous to the present, or that both are parts of one great plan, what is the deduction as to this tendency of reason, under the direction of virtue, to prevail?

But are there no requisites for this; what may be necessary that virtue may actually produce *what it has a tendency* to produce?

What is the Author's opinion as to the proportion between the good and the bad, even here on earth, and the relative natural power of the good?

What are the hinderances which prevent the union of good men over the earth, in opposition to force not under the control of virtue?

How may the condition of virtue *here*, very properly be represented, and particularly so as to its ultimate triumph?

If then the soul be naturally immortal: *if this state* be but a stage in our progress onward, what is the presumption as to this union of all good men, as well as other orders of virtuous beings, on the side of right and goodness in that future state?

Now suppose this tendency fully carried out in one or more orders of beings in any distant scenes and periods, what effect might it have on the orders of the vicious if seen by them, even throughout the universal kingdom of God?

For what purposes are these suppositions mentioned, since they are not offered as a literal exhibition of what is in fact the particular scheme of the universe?

Of what may all the advantageous tendencies of virtue be considered?

Repeat the hypothesis as to the effects and influence of a kingdom or society of men, perfectly virtuous for a succession of many ages, on itself and on other nations?

Does this harmonize with the general system of religion?

It may be objected, that notwithstanding all these tendencies of virtue, things may be going on throughout the universe, and may go on hereafter in the same mixed way as on the earth at present: What is your answer?

What four reasons has Butler given in addition to the foregoing, to show the ultimate triumph of virtue?

Upon the whole then, what is the conclusion as to the notion of a scheme of moral government, and of its ultimate progress towards absolute perfection?

CHAPTER IV.

1. What is the subject of this chapter?
2. What is meant by our present life being a state of probation for a future life?
3. Is not this equivalent to saying we are under the moral government of God, and are to give to Him an account of our actions?
4. State the difference between the terms probation and moral government?
5. What does the moral government of God, which religion teaches us, imply? What does his natural government imply?
6. In what does the natural government here meant consist, and what does it imply?
7. What facts show, that in our natural or temporal capacity, we are in a state of trial: that is, of difficulty and danger, analogous to our moral and religious trial?
8. What is it that constitutes this our trial in our natural and moral capacities?
9. How is this illustrated?
10. What is the deducible therefore, as to particular habits and passions in connection with moral behavior?
11. Further, how is it shown we are in a like state of trial, as to both our present and future good, by the very same passions excited by the very same means?
12. What is the conclusion?
13. As a general thing, *how* does the consideration of this state of trial, in their temporal and religious capacity, affect the behavior of mankind?
14. What is the parallel instituted as to the difficulties and dangers of miscarrying, failing in our religious and temporal interests from the ill behavior of others?
15. What are some of those dangers of failure arising out of personal misconduct, wrong behavior putting us in a more disadvantageous state of trial in our temporal capacity?
16. Does it seem as if mankind were in the most advantageous state naturally, or morally, for securing their present and future interests?
17. Does, after all, this low, careful and uncertain condition, afford just ground of complaint?
18. What renders the state of trial, religion teaches us we are in, credible?
19. What are the circumstances supposed, which if true, might form a presumption against the representation religion makes of our future and more general interests, depending on behavior and self-government?
20. If this then were our natural condition, what would be the

course of our reasonings as to the state of our future being?

21. But, what is the fact as to our happiness and security in the present state?
22. How do you answer the specious objection, It is impossible the Infinite Being should put upon us hazard and danger, which he foreknew must, from our very nature, end in error and misery.
23. To what are these observations an answer, and what do they show?
24. Give a summary of the chapter?

CHAPTER V.

1. What question naturally arises from the consideration of our being in a state of probation—one of so much difficulty and hazard?
2. What are some of the insuperable difficulties in which such a general inquiry as this is involved?
3. What partial answer may be given to the question?
4. There is another inquiry, however, lying side by side with this, of far higher and more pressing importance: What is it?
5. How is this question answered: What is the known end of this state of hazard, affliction, and difficulty in which we are placed?
6. Now, what is there analogous, in the beginning of life, considered as an education for mature age in the present world, to this our trial for a future one?
7. How is it shown there must be some necessary character and qualifications, without which persons cannot but be utterly incapable of happiness here or hereafter?
8. What is the constitution of human creatures, and indeed of all creatures we are acquainted with, as to capacities for states of life, for enlargement, for acquirements of experience and habits?
9. How is this illustrated by our own moral and intellectual capacities.
10. How is this still further illustrated by the law of habit?
11. What is habit? What are some of its laws?
12. Now, on what must all mental habits be formed?
13. Resolutions to do well are virtuous acts: endeavoring to enforce on our own, or on the minds of others, a practical sense of virtue, are virtuous acts: how are they to be converted into habits of active goodness?
14. Will mere going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts: talking well of it, and drawing fine pictures of it, necessarily, or certainly, form virtuous habits?
15. According to what law of habit does this take place?

16. Now, what follows from the fact, that practical habits are formed by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by repetition?
17. Does experience confirm this? Repeat the three instances of this.
18. It is then an appointment of nature that active habits are to be formed by exercise: that our nature is formed to yield in some such manner, to use and exercise; so that we may form a new character, and many habitudes of life, not given by nature, but which nature directs us to acquire. Illustrate this.
19. Indeed, what does the fact, that we have these capacities of improving by experience, acquired knowledge, and habits, prove?
20. How is this further shown?
21. What is the supposition illustrative of this?
22. What is the state of man, then, in these respects, as to that mature state of life which is the end of his creation, considering him only as related to this world?
23. How are we to regard childhood and youth in reference to mature age?
24. How is this still further illustrated?
25. Now, if these things be so, how are we to regard the present stages of life, in reference to a maturer condition of being hereafter?
26. Suppose we are unable to discern *how* the present life could be our preparation for another, ought *that* to be an objection to the credibility it is so?
27. What is the conclusion from this?
28. Suppose we include the idea of moral government, and consequently that virtue and piety are necessary qualifications for the future state, how will the question then stand?
29. Judging from the analogies of nature, is the Hereafter a solitary, inactive state?
30. Is ignorance of its employments: ignorance how justice, veracity, charity, can be exercised among its members, to be taken as proof there will be no such sphere of exercise for those virtues?
31. Inasmuch as the government established in the universe is moral, what is almost certainty as to fitment for happiness?
32. We have seen we are, from our natural power of habits, *capable* of moral improvement by discipline: show that we need it.
33. Show that mankind, and indeed all finite creatures, from their very constitution, are, before habits of virtue, deficient and in danger of deviations from right, and, therefore, need virtuous habits for a security.
34. Now, what is the general security against this danger of actually deviating from right, which finite creatures are in from propension or particular affections?

35. How is this illustrated?
Might not a sense of interest effectually restrain creatures from doing wrong?
36. Show how it comes to pass that creatures made upright fall: and that those who preserve their uprightness, by so doing, raise themselves to a more secure state in virtue.
37. What is here meant by the phrases, creatures made upright; or finitely perfect?
38. Now, how do these propensions and affections endanger the uprightness of such creatures?
39. How is such a case illustrated?
40. It is indeed impossible to say how much the first full overt act of irregularity might disorder the inward constitution; but is it as hard to say what would be the effect of repeated irregularities?
41. And conversely, how may it be shown that by following the moral principle, upright creatures may improve; may raise themselves to a higher and securer state of virtue?
42. Now then, what is the conclusion as to habits of vicious indulgence, and habits of virtuous self-government in themselves, and on the inward constitution and character?
43. May not the more complete security of virtuous beings in this higher perfection continue to consist in habits of virtue formed in a state of discipline: and if so, will it serve to explain how creatures made upright, may be in danger of going wrong?
44. If virtuous habits are needed for the full security of virtuous beings, *a fortiori*, what will be the *need* of such with respect to beings who have corrupted their nature?
45. Now, how is it shown that this present world *is peculiarly fit* to be a state of discipline for moral amendment and improvement?
46. Once more, how do allurements to wrong-doing: difficulties in the discharge of duty; the snares and temptations of vice under the present world, peculiarly fit it to be a state of discipline to such as will maintain their integrity?
47. For example.
48. Is self-denial essential to virtue and piety?
49. What is the sense in which this world is to be considered peculiarly fit to be a state of discipline for our improvement in virtue and piety?
50. Do we know the whole end and occasion, why mankind is placed in the present, which to many is a discipline of vice rather than of virtue?
51. What appears to be a fact as to this?
52. But may it not be objected, that since the generality do not improve or grow better in the present world, that this world was not intended for moral discipline? Answer the objection.

53. What does Butler say of the *appearance* of such an amazing *waste* in nature, of vegetable and animal life, unperfected?
54. How do you answer the objection, that behavior, though virtuous, yet proceeding from hope and fear, is only a discipline of self-love?
55. Are hope and fear then, proper means for the discipline of virtuous character?
56. Besides active virtue, what other essential part of a right character is there, and which is very much in our power to form ourselves to?
57. How do you answer the question, What need for resignation in a state of perfect happiness? Can nothing but afflictions require this virtue?
58. Now, why may there be need for that temper of the mind, which is formed by patience and contentedness with the degree of happiness allotted us, founded on habits of resignation?
59. What is the proper discipline for resignation? Why is it?
60. Is this the mere inuring of the mind to submit to power and force? What is the conclusion from this?
61. How do you answer the objection, that all this discipline of life might have been saved us, by our being made at once the creatures and characters *we were to be?*
62. In what case is this law of our nature, namely, that what we are to be, is to be the effect of *what we do*, definite and plain?
63. Besides the ideas of danger and difficulties, discipline and improvement, what is the third idea implied, in the present world being in a state of probation?
64. Of what may it be the means with reference to the ultimate disposal of moral beings?

CHAPTER VI.

1. What is the subject of this chapter?
2. To what has the condition of mankind, as inhabitants of this world, and under moral government, been shown to be analogous?
3. But, might not a fatalist object, that the opinion of universal necessity will account for the origin and preservation of all things; and hence there can be no such thing as our being in a state of religion: how do you meet this objection?
4. In an argument between a fatalist, and one who believed himself a free agent, as to the origin of a house, would their difference of belief as to necessity and freedom affect their agreement that it is the work of some architect? In what might they disagree?
5. Suppose, then, they proceeded to inquire concerning the con-

stitution of nature, how must they use the terms, necessity and freedom?

5. Why do we ascribe to God a necessary existence, uncaused by any agent?
7. Why cannot we ascribe this kind of necessity, a necessity antecedent in nature to design, to *everything* that exists?
8. Now, what does the fatalist mean, when he says everything is by necessity?
9. Suppose the system of fatalism, as thus explained: What then?
0. Now, since the scheme of fatalism pre-supposes a builder, what do the appearances of design and final causes in the constitution of nature prove this Builder to be?
1. Does the opinion, then, of necessity destroy the proof that there is an intelligent Author and Governor of the natural world?
2. Supposing, then, the opinion of necessity consistent with the constitution of the world, and the natural government we experience, would it destroy all reasonable ground of belief that we are in a probationary state?
3. What is the illustration to show that it does not, even on the fatalist's own principles of conduct?
4. What is the illustration to show that the scheme of fatalism is equally fallacious in a practical sense?
5. Even though it were admitted that the opinion of necessity is speculatively true, is it not practically false?
6. If, therefore, the opinion of necessity, be it ever so true speculatively, misleads us as to our real interests in the practical affairs of life, is it safe to trust to, in interests that are future, and more solemn still?
7. How does it follow, then, that if the evidence of religion on the supposition of freedom be conclusive, it is equally so on the supposition of necessity?
8. How is it shown, that fate, necessity, is, on the fatalist's principles, reconcilable with the idea of a Moral Governor and Designer?
9. Now, the benevolence, veracity, justice of the Creator, attributes which are the foundation of religion, are also reconcilable on the principle of necessity: How do you show this?
0. Well then, if universal necessity be reconcilable with the character of the Author of nature, does it not plainly destroy this moral character, and with it the proof of religion?
1. Show the proof from final causes, that the idea of an intelligent Moral Governor is not affected by the supposition that necessity is reconcilable with the constitution of things.
2. Prove that the dictates of the moral faculty are laws in a sense including sanctions.
3. What gives explicitness to the sanction: makes it, as one may say, expressed?

24. And why does it so?
25. What then is there the most evident reason to conclude in the government of God? and what is the deduction from it as to the obligations of religious worship?
26. Now, why can no valid objection be brought against the general proof of religion, nor against the proposition that we have such a moral faculty, nor against the conclusion that God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked finally?
27. By what else is this reasoning from fact confirmed, and what indeed makes the general proof of religion unanswerable real, even on the wild supposition of universal necessity?
28. Besides this, has natural religion any external evidence which the doctrine of necessity, if true, would not affect? What are the proofs that it has?
29. Now what is the particular value of these three proofs that natural religion has an external evidence, unaffected by the supposition of necessity?
30. Does the fact, that our moral understandings may be impaired and perverted, and their dictates not impartially attended to, weaken the belief they were designed by nature to inform us in the theory of things, and instruct us how to behave, and what to expect from such behavior?
31. Of what should this liableness we are in to prejudice and perversion, most seriously warn us?
32. Finally, suppose the fatalist tells you: The method of rewards and punishments, you say, must go on the supposition we are free, and not necessary agents: But the Author of nature knows we are not, and hence it is absurd to suppose He will reward or punish us hereafter: How would you answer the objection?
33. What then is the conclusion from the foregoing considerations?
34. In what sense are we to understand that general assertion, that the opinion of necessity is destructive essentially of all religion?
35. Recapitulate the leading arguments of the chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

1. What is the subject of the seventh chapter?
2. Admitting that the analogy of nature strengthens the credibility of the general doctrines of religion, as facts; and that the notion of necessity does not destroy this credibility, yet may there not be objections against the wisdom, goodness, and equity of the Divine administration implied in the idea of religion, and for which analogy can furnish no answer? How do you meet this objection?

Why cannot analogy furnish a direct answer to such an objection?

But still, on the supposition of a moral constitution, and a moral government over it, analogy has its use: What is it?

Now, what are the teachings of analogy that show this?

Show that the natural government of the world is a scheme infinite and incomprehensible, and that, analogically, the moral government must be so?

In truth, do the natural and moral constitution of the world form two distinct schemes?

What is the conclusion from this?

Thus, for example.

Suppose it asserted that the origin and continuance of evil might have been prevented by interpositions so guarded as to preclude all mischief arising from them: or suppose it is asserted that a scheme of government is in itself an imperfection, since more good might have been produced by single insulated acts of distinctive goodness and justice than by any such scheme or constitution: How would you answer the objection?

What, in truth, is the common but really satisfactory answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of God? For example.

How may this be further shown, namely, that all objections against the goodness and justice of God in the constitution of things are forceless?

Now, upon the supposition that the moral is analogous to the natural world, and in which natural ends are reached by means both apparently undesirable and unlikely, what is our conclusion?

But is there not a presumption against this, in the fact, that we do not always see those means have this tendency, but rather the contrary?

By what analogy is it shown, that though the commission of wickedness may be beneficial to the world, yet that it would be infinitely more beneficial to refrain from it?

When it is said that the actual permission of evil is beneficial to the world, what is meant?

What are some of the reasons for supposing that the natural government of the world is carried on by general laws?

Now, though every single case may be provided for by these general laws, yet might not interpositions to prevent irregularities, which general laws could neither prevent nor remedy, be manifestly attended with some bad effects?

Upon the whole, then, what is the conclusion as to interpositions?

Two objections may here be raised: *First*, that we must judge of religion as we do of other things, by what we do know, and reject all supposed relations and impossibilities which to us are unknown: and *secondly*, that these un-

known impossibilities and relations militate as much ag
as for religion: How do you answer them? Answer
first.

21. How do you answer the second?
22. Even though the future consequences of virtue and vice w
doubtful, would it not be, after all, the highest prudence
abstain from all wickedness, and to practise the right?
23. But again, these objections against religion cannot be made
of to invalidate its proofs: How do the analogies of nat
show this?
24. Finally, what does analogy show us definitely as to our c
pability of judging of the possibilities of things, and t
various relations in nature?

Recapitulate the leading arguments of the chapter.

CONCLUSION.

1. How do the observations of the last chapter lead us to con
sider the present life?
2. What then is the character of the scheme in which we find
ourselves placed?
3. What is the only intelligent way of accounting for the origi
and continuance of the world?
4. Now, as many things render it palpably absurd, that we sha
cease to be, at death, what reflections must, at times, sug
gest themselves to earnest thinking men?
5. On what is the probability that we shall be living creature
after death grounded?
6. What is the argument for this from experience?
7. Now, what is the character of the prospect which immortality
opens to us?
8. How has it been shown that to good actions, *as such*, happi
ness has been annexed, and to bad actions, *as such*, misery
in other words, that the good will be rewarded and the ba
punished?
9. Does this establish the opinion of a moral government? an
what are the apprehensions it suggests?
10. How is it shown from the analogies of things that there i
nothing incredible in supposing a future condition, depen
dent on our behavior *now*?
11. What is the teaching of religion on this subject?
12. By what else is this intention of nature, namely, that th
present is probationary, rendered credible?
13. What are the answers to the objections to religion from th
doctrine of necessity?
14. As these things are matters of fact, what should their legiti
mate influence be on our lives and conduct?

5. Can mere passion in such a state be pleaded as an excuse for a vicious life?
6. Finally, are the proper motives to religion and the proofs of it the same: and what are they?

PART II.

OF REVEALED RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

1. What is the object of this chapter?
2. On what grounds do some reject all revelation as in its very nature incredible and fictitious?
3. What consideration shows that natural religion is not enough for all our moral and spiritual wants?
4. In fact, is there any likeliness that any one could have reasoned out a system of natural religion, full, simple, and unmarred by superstition?
5. Admitting the generality of mankind might have reasoned out such a system, might not revealed religion have still been needed?
6. What is the argument used by some, who do not deny the possibility of revelation, but rather overlook its claims, as of little importance if natural religion be followed?
7. How do you answer an argument of this kind?
8. What two fundamental considerations to be attended to in discussing the importance of Christianity?
9. How is it shown that Christianity is a republication of natural religion?
0. What were the miracles and prophesies of Scripture intended to prove?
1. How also, do these prove the general providence of God over the world as our Moral Governor and Judge?
2. It is true, it may be disputed how far miracles can prove natural religion, and objections may specially be urged against it, but practically there are none: prove this.
3. How then are we to regard the Law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ?
4. By what supposition is this enforced?
5. What great truths are taught in revelation, and which natural religion teaches most imperfectly?
6. Furthermore, the miraculous publication of Christianity not only proved the truths of religion, when it was first published, but has given permanency and diffusiveness to these

truths by the establishment of a visible church. S this.

17. What farther tendency has a visible church to promote ural religion?
18. What are positive institutions?
19. Why are all the objections against Christianity, drawn its perversions, and from the supposition of its havin but little good influence, atheistic in their tendency?
20. Show that the arguments against Christianity, drawn its abuses and corruptions, cannot be consistently t upon principles of theism.
21. Christianity then, is a republication of natural rel authoritatively, and with additions adapted to the s of mankind: show that it is obligatory on every man, professes to believe it, to strengthen its progress and over the world.
22. Is Christianity, however, simply an external institutic natural religion, and a new promulgation of God's ge providence, as the Righteous Judge and Governor o world?
23. What positive duties does a profession of Christianity e and which natural religion does not recognize?
24. From what do the obligations we are under of religious age to the Son and Spirit arise?
25. What are the relations on which these obligations of rest?
26. In what does the essence of natural religion, as an in principle, consist?
27. In what does the essence of revealed religion, as an in principle, consist?
28. Does it make any difference as to the obligations we ar der of paying religious regard to each of these I Persons, whether these relations are made known to reason or revelation, and why?
29. What are the inward religious regards, growing out of relations to us of the Son and Spirit, as revealed i plan of the Gospel?
30. How far are the exercises of internal worship a matt pure revealed command?
31. What facts are overlooked by those who treat Christ as of little importance, provided natural religion l spected?
32. If revelation be true, if Christ be the mediator betwee and man, may not the obstinate or careless disrega his offices be attended with judicial punishments?
33. How is it farther shown from the analogy of nature, t may be no slight matter for a man to reject or treat levity, the character and offices of the Spirit?
34. What is the conclusion from this, on the supposition

Christianity is even true or credible, as to our treatment of it?

5. Distinction between moral and positive precepts? Between moral and positive duties?
6. On what are positive duties founded?
7. State again the distinction between positive and moral duties.
8. How far is the observance of positive duties an object of religious obedience or value?
9. Suppose we are so situated that a moral and positive duty seems each obligatory, and we can obey but one: Which of the two should we obey?
10. Does the general tenor of Scripture favor this view: that is, that no positive duty can supersede a moral duty?
11. What is the teaching of our Lord himself as to the comparative obligation of a moral and a positive precept?
12. Recapitulate the reasons, why a moral precept is of higher obligation than a positive precept?
13. Give a brief summary of the chief topics discussed in the chapter.

CHAPTER II.

1. What is the subject of this chapter?
2. Is there any presumption from analogy against the general scheme of Christianity: namely, that God created and governs the world by Jesus Christ, and by Him will hereafter judge the world: and that all men are under the secret influence of the Spirit?
3. If there be such a presumption, it must be from one of two grounds: What are they?
4. Show there is from the analogy of nature no proof that the scheme of Christianity was discoverable by reason.
5. Show that there is no presumption against Christianity on the ground that a revelation is unlike the whole course of nature.
6. What are miracles? Distinction between visible and invisible miracles?
7. The object of the preceding remarks?
8. Why is there no presumption from analogy against a revelation at the beginning of the world as miraculous?
9. State the three aspects under which this, as a question of fact, is viewed.
10. What is the voice of history and tradition on this subject: namely, that religion was, *at first*, reasoned out?
11. What follows from this?
12. What further objection may be urged from analogy against miracles, particularly after the settlement, and during a continuance of a course of nature?

13. Supposing we could, in the history of some other world placed in like circumstances with our own, come at presumptive proof for or against such a revelation, why would the proof be infinitely precarious?
14. What, then, is the only material question as to miracles and common facts?
15. What consideration affords distinct particular reasons for miracles?
16. Why must not miracles be compared to common natural events?
17. What are the deductions from this discussion?
18. Recapitulate the chief arguments of this chapter.

CHAPTER III.

1. What is the object of this chapter?
2. From what sources, are objections against Christianity derived, besides those already mentioned?
3. How are these objections met?
4. What is the character of objections against Christianity, as distinguished from the objections against its evidence?
5. Do the analogies of things plainly teach that we are competent judges as to the revealed scheme of Providence?
6. Illustrations to show this?
7. Show that these observations are applicable to inspiration in particular?
8. Of what are we beforehand ignorant as to natural knowledge?
9. Analogies with this as to revealed religion: that is, of what are we beforehand ignorant as to a revelation?
10. It is objected that a revelation by verbal tradition, would have answered all purposes, and secured against corruptions: How do you answer it?
11. What is the palpable conclusion from this; and why?
12. What is *the great question* concerning Christianity?
13. Why can no disputes about inaccuracy or obscurity of style, or various readings, or disputes about authors of certain books, nor any such, overthrow the authority of the Scriptures?
14. In discussing the authenticity of revelation, we cannot apply the same argument particularly to the prophetic books that we do to common books, namely, *that such and such*, should be the sense of the passage, or would have been expressed more plainly: Why not?
15. It is objected that internal improbabilities of all kinds weaken external probable proofs: How do you answer this?
16. It has been shown, that we are not competent judges what supernatural instruction in any sort or degree, was to be expected: and it is self-evident, the objections of an incom-

petent judgment must be frivolous: now go one step farther, and show from the analogy of things, that it is beforehand, highly probable, men will have objections against a revelation, however unexceptionable it may be.

For example.

What is the legitimate conclusion from these examples?

Now, apply these general observations to a particular objection, namely, that in the apostolic ages certain gifts and powers called miraculous, were exercised in a strangely irregular and disorderly manner, and hence it is denied that they were really miraculous: How do you answer the objection?

Now, point out the analogies of the case: namely, that natural and supernatural knowledge, are liable to similar hindrances and improvements.

But if it be objected, that it is incredible so many ages should have passed before Christianity was announced as the great remedy for the moral evils of the world, and then too, delivered in an obscure, doubtful, difficult way, and liable to perversions: how will you meet this objection?

And now, what is the proper deduction from the foregoing, as to the decisions of human reason respecting the facts of revealed religion?

In judging of the morality of the Scriptures, what is the rightful province of reason?

Show that there are precepts given in the Scriptures to particular persons, requiring particular actions, and which, without such precepts, would be vicious and immoral? Do Scripture precepts then, require vicious actions?

To what do these observations and facts narrow down the question?

What are the three chief principles discussed in this chapter?

CHAPTER IV.

What is the subject of the fourth chapter?

What was shown in the last chapter, from the analogy of things to be highly credible beforehand, supposing a revelation to be made?

What is the objection to this argument?

How may these, and all such objections be triumphantly answered?

Is Christianity, as a scheme, within the grasp of human comprehension?

How is the moral government of God exercised?

How is Christianity defined?

What are some of the parts of this wonderful economy for the moral renovation of the human race?

9. Quote the Scripture proofs?
10. Is this system or scheme of things, however, perfectly comprehended by the human mind?
11. What does the Apostle Paul himself say on this subject?
12. Now, reasoning from the analogy of things, what may be regarded a sufficient answer to all objections against the scheme for the moral recovery of man?
13. In the Christian dispensation, as well as in the natural scheme of things, means are used to accomplish ends: What follows from this as to objections against the perfection of Christianity?
14. How is the whole common course of nature carried on?
15. Are all these general foreordained laws known to us? For example.
16. How do we reach the conclusion then, that the whole course of nature is governed by general laws?
17. Now, if from seeing that a part of the course of nature is carried on by general laws, we conclude that the whole economy of nature is, what may we justly suppose credible as to what we call supernatural interferences?
18. For example.
19. What is the conclusion from these examples?
20. Upon the whole then, to what is the appearance of the deficiencies and irregularities in nature owing, and what is the conclusion from this?
21. Design of the closing part of this chapter.
22. It is objected, that the scheme of the Christian dispensation represents the Infinite Mind, as reduced to the necessity of resorting to intricate means to accomplish the salvation of the world, just as men are forced to resort to roundabout ways, and perplexed contrivances, to accomplish ends. Answer the objection?
23. What are the illustrations to show that the natural world and the government of it, is not a fixed scheme, but progressive?
24. Point out the analogies then, between the operations going on in the daily course of natural providence, and in the supernatural dispensation of Christianity?
25. What is our conclusion from all this?
26. Give an analysis of the chapter?

CHAPTER V.

1. What is the subject of the fifth chapter?
2. How has this, as a distinctive fact of Christianity, been treated?
3. Is it, on a strict and earnest examination, so objectionable?
4. Prove that the general idea of a Mediator is founded in the

analogy of things: that the visible government of God is actually administered in this way?

5. Now, if the visible government, which God exercises over the world, be through the instrumentality of others, what is the presumption from analogy as to his invisible government?
6. Now, as we must suppose the world is under moral government, is in a state of religion, let us ask what moral government implies, before we discuss the doctrine of Redemption. What does religion teach us that moral government implies?
7. Is it to be supposed we are made acquainted with all the ends and reasons of future punishment, or why such and such consequent misery should follow vice?
8. How may we suppose, however, such punishments will follow sin?
9. When it is said that future punishment may follow wickedness by natural consequence, what is meant?
10. It is objected by some good men, that this is giving the execution of justice to nature, and derogatory to the authority of the Moral Governor of the world: How do you answer this?
11. Is there in the constitution of nature provision made, that all the bad natural consequences of men's actions should not always actually follow, even on the foregoing supposition?
12. How is this illustrated.
13. What is the instance illustrative of severity and indulgence in the constitution of things, noticed by the author?
14. Now then, it appears from the course of nature, that though all the evils brought on us by our own misconduct cannot be prevented; still, for some, reliefs, and in many cases, perfect remedies, have been applied: What may this provision be called in the original constitution of the world, as distinguished from goodness in general?
15. Now, since the whole known constitution and course of things affords us instances of such compassion, what hope, according to the analogy of nature, might we cherish as to the ruinous natural consequences of moral evil?
16. It is true that the generality of mankind are feebly, if at all, sensible of the awful evils of vice; but are not the evil consequences of rashness, wilfulness, neglects, things we scarcely call evils, fearfully impressive?
17. If such be the consequences of such actions, can any one say how fatal the unprevented consequences of profligacy, vice, and the stubborn contempt of moral order and right, may be, according to the general rule of Divine government?
18. Could any one say, with anything like intuitive certainty, how far these evil consequences could possibly be prevented, consistently with the eternal rule of right?

19. And yet from the course of natural government what hope might be entertained?
20. Now as we are utterly ignorant of what the natural consequences of vice are, or how they are to follow if not prevented, or whether anything we could do would alone, and of itself, prevent the infliction, what are the teachings of the analogy of nature or Providence on the subject?
21. What other analogies prove the same, namely, that mere amendment and repentance are of themselves wholly insufficient to prevent the future consequences of vice?
22. Now what light does revelation cast over the darkness and doubt of the human mind on this momentous question?
23. What does revelation teach as to the character of the unknown laws of God's more general government? Is this in harmony with the analogy of things?
24. What facts show that mankind are in a state of degradation, different from that in which they were originally created?
25. Is there anything contrary to analogy in the statement that mankind have been brought into this state by the crime of our first parents?
26. What is the fundamental fact which underlays the entire scheme of Redemption?
27. In what three relations has Christ been revealed to us as interposing for the redemption of the world?
28. Give the Scripture quotations on which our knowledge of his mediatorial character is based.
29. What particularly constitutes the prophetical office of the Messiah?
30. What particularly constitutes the kingship of the Messiah?
31. What constitutes the relation of Christ to us as a priest?
32. Is the idea of vicarious suffering confined to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures?
33. Is it an idea in harmony with the analogy of things?
34. Do we understand how the death of Christ made atonement for the sins of the world?
35. State some of the different views of theologians on this subject.
36. What is rightfully and properly our duty in reference to all such views?
37. Now, why is it our duty to accept this offered salvation, reverently and gratefully, by doing the conditions on which it is offered, though we cannot understand *how* it is available, or why *it has been made*, rather than any other?
38. Upon the supposition of the necessity of a Mediator, are we, antecedently to revelation, judges of the whole nature of his office, any more than we are, antecedently to revelation, judges whether a Mediator was or was not necessary?
39. What follows from this as to all arguments against the expediency of particular things revealed to have been done or suffered by a Mediator?

40. It is objected, and stubbornly too, that the doctrine of the Atonement represents God as indifferent whether he punished the innocent or the guilty.
41. Now, if there were any force at all in the objection, would it not be stronger in one respect against natural providence than against Christianity?
42. That in the end men will receive according to their personal deserts, is implied in the idea of a moral government as well as revealed in the Scriptures; but may not, during the progress and for the completion of this moral scheme, vicarious punishments be fit and absolutely necessary?
43. Now, from one of what two sources must all objections against the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ originate?
44. In fact, what argument in support of this doctrine has never yet been satisfactorily answered, and is regarded as unanswerable?
45. What then, from the foregoing, comes of the objections against the Christian doctrine of the Atonement?
46. What is said of the folly and presumption of all such objections?
47. Lastly, does not the whole analogy of nature teach us *we are not to expect* the like information concerning the Divine conduct, as concerning our own duty?
48. Is it a fact, however, that the reasons for all the Christian precepts are evident?
49. Give a brief analysis of the principal topics of the chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

1. What is the object of this chapter?
2. On what weak and absurd suppositions are these objections founded?
3. What is the best way of meeting the argument founded on the supposed doubtfulness of the evidence of religion?
4. Now, is the evidence on which we act in the ordinary affairs of life, as to our temporal interests, and the best means of securing them, plain and certain in all cases?
5. Furthermore, does not the Author of nature bestow on some gifts, which he does not upon others, though, as far as we know, all equally need them?
6. Well now, what is the conclusion from these and similar well-known facts in the constitution of nature, as to the objection brought against the uncertainty and partialness of the evidence of revelation?
7. Apply this to the question at issue. Show that the different degrees of religious light, given at intervals, and with different intensities, and to different nations, are perfectly

uniform, and in harmony with the conduct of Providence in the distribution of his other blessings.

8. What great truth, if kept before the mind steadily in this discussion, would dispel every shadow of injustice or harshness cast over the moral providence of God by this apparently partial revelation of religious light?

9. Does this imply, that every person's condition here, is equally advantageous with respect to futurity?

10. Does it imply that men should be any less earnest to get out of that disadvantageous condition, or that others should be any less earnest to help them out of it?

11. In what other way may we account for this apparently unequal distribution of religious advantages and information?

12. And of what else is this also, most probably the solution?

13. Suppose that Revelation was universal: what circumstances would make the religious situation of some, and the disadvantages of some, as widely different as at the present?

14. Three practical reflections are offered, to show that there is no just ground of complaint against the want of universality of Revelation, or the deficiency of its proofs—state them.

15. What is the illustration of the first, viz.: That the doubtfulness and uncertainty of the evidence of religion may constitute one particular part of some men's moral discipline?

16. What is the illustration of the second practical reflection, viz.: That if the evidence of religion should seem to any doubtful, even in the highest supposable degree; this doubtful evidence will put them into a *general state of probation*, in the moral and religious sense?

17. What is the ground of these observations—that which renders them just and true?

18. Even admitting the evidence of religion to be as doubtful as it is pretended, are there not conditions in which men are highly accountable for a behavior, in which they plainly see there is a right and a wrong?

19. What degree of evidence for religion does doubting, concerning religion imply?

20. What is the illustration of the third practical reflection, viz.: That the difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved, is no more a just ground of complaint, than the external circumstances of temptation we are placed in, or the difficulties in the practice of religion after a full conviction of its truth?

21. Show that there is no absurdity in supposing, that the speculative difficulties, in which the evidence of religion is involved, may make even the principal part of some men's trials?

22. What is there analogous to this, with respect to the situation in which some persons are placed in the world?

23. It is possible men's dissatisfaction with the evidences of religion, may be their own fault: For example.
24. State some of the causes that may hinder some men from seeing religious truth, which is readily seen by others.
25. Is this in accordance with the analogy of things?
26. What is the voice of the Scriptures on this subject?
27. Further, is it not a fact, that the general proof of natural religion and Christianity, is level to the comprehension of the least educated classes, if they but attend to it?
28. This proof is indeed real, but it is objected that a thorough examination of the evidence of religion requires knowledge, time, and attention, and that such classes cannot afford the time; have not the means of making such an examination: How do you answer this objection?
29. Again, it may be objected, if a prince were to send directions to a servant, he would take care, that they carried unmistakeable marks of their authority and meaning, so that there would be no possibility of doubt as to who they came from. What is the proper answer to this kind of objection?
30. What is the answer to this from the very nature of religion?
31. The will of God, respecting morality and religion, may be considered absolute or conditional: What is meant by this?
32. Upon the whole then, what does a state of religion imply?
33. Give a summary of the principles taught in this chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

1. What is the subject of this chapter; and with what view is it to be discussed?
2. What are the two direct fundamental proofs of Christianity?
3. Besides these, what collateral proofs are there reducible to neither of these, yet making up one argument, when taken together with the direct proofs?
4. How does the author propose treating the subject?
5. *Proofs of Christianity from miracles and prophecy.* Character of the historic evidence of the miracles of Moses, the prophets, and of Christ and the apostles?
6. Argument drawn from the style of the Scripture narrative of miracles?
7. The argument derived from the fact, that the Scripture account of miracles has been quoted from age to age as genuine, from the time they are said to have been written till the present?
8. What contemporary events confirm the miraculous history of the Jewish and Christian miracles? Besides this, what may be added as a proof of the same?

9. The genuineness and authority of Scripture history may be rejected, *when?*
10. What are the evidences of the genuineness of St. Paul's epistles. 26
11. What distinct and particular evidence is there of the genuineness of the first Epistle to the Corinthians? 27
12. Why do these epistles of Paul form of themselves a very peculiar kind of proof of the genuineness of Christianity? 28
13. What is the third remark, on the direct proof of Christianity from miracles?
14. Does this appear to have been the case with any other religion: the Mahomedan, for example?
15. On what grounds do you show that Christianity was received into the world, upon the belief of miracles, in that very age in which it is said they were wrought: and that it was on their faith in these miracles that the multitudes of the first converts embraced it?
16. Is this to be regarded as real evidence?
17. Why is this considered as proof distinct from the direct historical evidence?
18. Is the immediate conversion of such numbers in the first ages of Christianity, to be considered a presumption of something superhuman in Christianity?
19. It is objected that numberless enthusiasts have, in different ages and countries, exposed themselves to the same difficulties which the primitive Christians did: How do you answer the objection?
20. Again, it is said enthusiasm greatly weakens the evidence of testimony, even for facts in matters of religion. What is the answer?
21. Supposing that enthusiasm be admitted as an argument against religion, might not the same charge equally be brought against all human testimony in common matters?
22. Again, it is hinted, that though the apostles and first Christians were not deceivers, nor altogether deceived themselves, yet their general testimony is not to be relied on, because they might still in part be deceived themselves, and in part designedly deceive others: a thing credible from the mixture of real enthusiasm and knavery to be met with in the founders of all religious systems. Answer it.
23. It is still farther objected, that it is a fact, mankind have in different ages been strangely deluded with pretences to miracles and wonders, and that there is considerable historic evidence for miracles acknowledged on all hands fabulous. Answer these objections.
24. To what is this mode of argument compared?
25. Upon the whole, then, what is the conclusion as to the liability of men to be deceived from enthusiasm in religion, and

the capability of men dishonestly endeavoring to deceive others?

In fact, what only can destroy the evidence from testimony of the truth of Christianity?

Now show how unlikely this would be: that Christ and the apostles were deceived.

Now, from the foregoing observations, what is the conclusion to which sceptics must come?

EVIDENCE FROM PROPHECY.

The obscurity or unintelligibleness of parts of prophecy has been urged against the evidence for Christianity from that source: Answer the objection.

How is this illustrated?

It is objected that the prophecies, considering each of them distinctly by itself, do not at all appear they were intended for those particular events to which Christians apply them. Answer the objection.

What is the analogy in proof of this, drawn from mythological and satirical writings, where the satire is to a certain degree concealed?

Now apply this to the question under discussion.

If the apparent fulfilment of prophecy be considered explanatory of its meaning, it will bring the question to this: Has a series of prophecies been in any real sense of the word fulfilled? Why will it so reduce the question?

How is it shown that it is useless on the part of objectors to endeavor to prove that the prophetic history is applicable to events of the age in which it was written, or of ages before it?

Granting Porphyry could have shown that the seventh verse of the seventh chapter of Daniel was applicable to events which happened before or about the age of Antiochus Epiphanes, would it at the present day have much weight with reasonable men?

On the whole then, what is the legitimate matter of inquiry concerning the sacred prophecies?

What are the remarks which the Author makes on different classes of inquirers?

General argument for the truth of Christianity: Of what does it consist?

What is the first reason the Author offers for this mode of argument?

What is the second reason assigned?

Now state the argument to be examined.

Why may this revelation, whether real or supposed, be treated as wholly historical?

Show that the general design of Scripture is essentially distinctive from that of all other books.

45. What is the view which Revelation takes of the com fairs of the world and what is going on in it?
46. Does it seem to contain anything like a general history chief governments of the world, as having affecte likely yet to affect, the general state of religion? I ample.
47. What are the materials then of Scripture history, take whole, which afford ample room for criticism and tion, or inconsistence in its several parts?
48. Again: Why does the supposed doubtfulness of the ev of Revelation imply a positive argument that *Revela true?*
49. Give an outline of the Scripture facts foretold in the C New Testament?
50. Suppose these facts are, for the first time, explained to son, and in connection with them, the fact that the sion and establishment of the moral system of w in the world is owing to this Book: and suppose hi to be informed of the number of nations that ackno the authority of this Book, and of the importance religion it teaches to mankind, *what opinion wo form of it as a whole?*
51. Suppose further, that he is informed of the acknowledg tiquity of the Book—that profane history confirms i ratives—that its characters are real and natural there are no errors to be found in it affecting its g credibility: Further, suppose him informed that was such a nation as the Jews, whose governmer polity was founded on the law here said to be given by Moses, as from Heaven—that their existence as tion depended on their acknowledgment of *one God God of the universe:* Further, suppose this perso formed that *One*, claiming to be the Messiah and of ish extraction, appeared at the very time prophecy told—that he was rejected by the body of the nati foretold—that in the course of a few years he was ack edged and believed on as *The Promised*, by great bers of Gentiles on the evidence of miracles, and of there is still a strong historic evidence—that this re spread and became the religion of the world, despi bitterest persecutions and opposition—that in the time the Jewish nation and government were destro the people driven into captivity and dispersed ove globe, and are so to this very day—peculiar as i days of Moses, and everywhere regarded, in the guage of Scripture, "*an astonishment*," and that all facts had been foretold hundreds of years before: what would be the effect of such a narrative on this mind, supposing him a frank and sincere seeker of tru
52. Would then, the circumstances and collateral events

nected with prophecy, such as the present aspect of the Jewish people—of Judea—of the change which the religion of the Messiah has effected over the earth—be regarded by such an inquirer as inconsiderable or valueless evidences of the truth of the Sacred Scriptures?

53. Again, suppose these collateral circumstances and events compared with the Scripture passages to which they seemed to correspond: would not their coincidence have with a person who heard them for the first time, very great weight—greater than is easy for us, from our familiarity with them, to estimate?

54. Suppose it be objected that these coincidences between events and prophecy are accidental: How will you answer this?

55. What advantage will it be to serious-minded persons to set down all of real weight in the proof of religion, and particularly the many seeming completions of prophecy, in taking a general view of the evidences of Christianity?

56. What fact is carefully and solemnly to be remembered in making out a series of probable proofs on the opposite side, and why?

57. Now, as the truth of religion, like the truth of all common matters, is to be judged of by all the evidence taken together, in what does the strength of the argument for Christianity lie?

58. What has been proved in this and the preceding chapter, as to the truths of Revelation? And what has particularly been attempted in this chapter?

CHAPTER VIII.

1. What is the subject of this chapter?
2. State the five objections against employing the argument from the analogy of nature, to the proof of revealed religion.
3. How do you answer the *first* of these objections, viz.: That religion is not to be proved by saying, there are the same difficulties in natural as in revealed religion: men require to have the difficulties in both cleared away.
4. Answer the *second* objection: That it is a strange way to convince men of the obligations of religion, by showing them that they have as little reason for their worldly, as they have for their religious pursuits.
5. In what does the force of this objection lie?
6. Answer the *third* objection, viz.: It is a strange way of vindicating Moral Providence, by showing that the same objections against it, are equally so against a natural providence.
7. What are the *five reasons* assigned, to show that it is more

important to convince men of the obligations they are under as subjects of a Moral Providence, than it is to justify the wisdom, goodness, and justice of the Creator, as manifested in natural providence?

8. Answer the *fourth* objection, viz.: That analogy is no answer to such objections, for analogical reasoning, carried to its utmost capability, will still leave the mind unsatisfied?
9. What is the true practical question in debating this objection?
10. Answer the *fifth* objection, viz.: That it is not to be imagined mankind will be influenced by evidence that is doubtful, so as to forego, from a regard to religion, present interests and present pleasures.
11. What is the practical question in the discussion of this objection?
12. How has religion all along, in the foregoing Treatise, been considered?
13. Show the difference between abstract, and matter-of-fact, questions.
14. What is the conclusion drawn from this distinction?
15. Now what does the Author say of the force and value of this entire work?

CONCLUSION.

1. Why are inattention and disregard on the part of those who have had the moral system of the world explained by Christianity, and its claims often inculcated upon them, inexcusable?
2. What does inattention to revealed religion imply? Why does it imply this?
3. How do you show we are under the most serious obligations to inquire into the evidence of Christianity, and embrace it, on the supposition of its truth?
4. To what lengths do the rejectors of natural and revealed religion carry their opposition, on speculative grounds of disbelief?
5. Do such objectors deny that revealed religion has no solid grounds of evidence?
6. On what do such persons ground their objections?
7. Show *how* this Treatise is adapted to meet such objections Do this, by giving a brief synopsis of the chapters on revealed religion.

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The Convention of State and County Superintendents of Schools in Vermont, held pursuant to adjournment in the State House, Montpelier, Oct. 14, 1846, unanimously recommended SANDERS' SERIES OF SCHOOL BOOKS, consisting of Sanders' Spelling Book, Pictorial or Primary School Primer, and Sanders' Readers, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, for the uniform adoption in the Common Schools of the State. Of this Convention HON. D. M. CAMP was President.

From A. S. Lovell, Principal of City High School, Middletown, Conn.

Having carefully examined SANDERS' SERIES OF SCHOOL BOOKS, I most cheerfully recommend their general adoption, as I believe them to excel in several respects any series at present before the public.

July, 1845. A. S. LOVELL.

Extract from a letter from Rev. Stephen Martindale and Dr. Nathaniel Ives, the County Committee on Reading Books for Rutland Co., Vt

To Mr. C. W. Sanders:—

Sir—Comparatively it is but light praise to say that the lessons are admirably arranged to give the necessary healthful exercise to the opening and expanding intellect of the pupil; gradually increasing from the simpler forms of ideas to those that are complex, and by easy gradations, progressing to even the initiatory forms of profound ratiocination, all in a clear, pure, and at times even an elevated style, that cannot fail to be of essential service to pupils using these books. The grand crowning excellence of this series, is the rich vein of sound philosophy and truly Christian morality, that pervades the whole; uncontaminated by even an appearance of that sickly pseudo imitation of Christianity, with which we have found some works of this class to be unhappily replete: and which, under the specious mask of an outward respect for the principles of our holy religion, artfully inculcate the idea that man, unaided by divine grace, is perfectly able to render himself all that God requires; and that, as a necessary consequence, the Christian religion, being in reality unnecessary, is, in truth, but a useless and burdensome form of superstition.

In conclusion, allow us to assure you that it will afford us unalloyed satisfaction, to learn that the public appreciate your works in a degree commensurate with their merits.

We are, sir, respectfully and truly yours,

STEPHEN MARTINDALE,
NATHANIEL IVES.

Wallingford, Rutland Co., Vt., September 18, 1846.

SANDERS' SERIES OF READERS.

From the Committee on the Subject of Education, appointed by the Senate of the State of Illinois.

We have compared SANDERS' SERIES OF READING BOOKS with the Eclectic Series of Prof. McGuffey, and we have a very decided preference for those of Mr. Sanders, and recommend that they be adopted uniformly by the schools of the State of Illinois. Farther, we have examined Day and Thomson's Arithmetical Series, Willson's Histories, and Gray's Chemistry, and find them superior to any other works of the kind, with which we are acquainted, and think that the interests of education would be advanced by their introduction generally into the Common and High Schools of the State.

City of Springfield, Jan 16, 1849.

NEWTON CLOUD,
JOSEPH GILLESPIE,
WILLIAM TICHNOR,
W. B. PLATS,
P. C. HARDY,
} Committee of Senate on the Subject of Education.

An extract from a communication to the Board of Trustees and Visitors of the Common Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio, signed by the SEVENTY TEACHERS of that city.

After examining such reading books as we have had access to, we are of opinion that the Series of Readers, known as Sanders' Series, have merits which highly recommend them to your favorable notice—some of which are peculiar. We believe that the important object of gradually progressive lessons, both in subjects and language, is more nearly attained in that series than in any other with which we are acquainted.

Signed by SEVENTY TEACHERS, Cincinnati.

Extract from a Petition, presented to the Board of Education, by the Principals of the Public Schools for the city of Rochester.

"We, the undersigned, teachers in the Public Schools in the city, believing as we do, that some changes in our text-books, upon certain conditions, would give a healthful stimulus, facilitating our onward progress, therefore unite, earnestly soliciting the Hon. Board of Education to substitute SANDERS' SPELLING BOOK AND SERIES OF READERS for use in our schools, for those now in use.

C. MESERVE,	Principal	No. 1.	C. W. COLYER,	in	No. 14.
M. DOUGLASS,	"	No. 9.	W. OGDEN,	"	No. 6.
J. R. VOSBURGH,	"	No. 13.	E. S. TREAT,	"	No. 5.
LEWIS BIXBY,	"	No. 14.	A. W. FISHER,	"	No. 10.
DONALD G. FRASER,		No. 15.	WM. DALLIS,	"	No. 3.
WM. WATSON,	"	No. 11.	A. N. MERRIMAN,	"	No. 11.

From Principals of Public Schools in the city of Buffalo.

We have examined SANDERS' FIFTH READER, edited by C. W. Sanders of New York, and find the selections appropriate, and their moral tone of a highly elevated character The work seems admirably calculated to make easy, natural, and intellectual readers.

A. L. BINGHAM, Prin. of Public School, No. 11.
SAMUEL SLADE, Prin. of Public School, No. 3.
D. P. LEE, Principal of Public School, No. 7.
June 14, 1848. E. F. COOK, 3d Department, Public School, No. 10.

From A. S. Lovell, Principal of City High School, Middletown, Conn.

Having carefully examined SANDERS' SERIES OF SCHOOL BOOKS, I most cheerfully recommend their general adoption, as I believe them to excel in several respects any series at present before the public.

July, 1845. A. S. LOVELL.

From D. C. Bloomer, Principal of Union School, Seneca Falls, N. Y.

MR. SANDERS' SERIES OF SCHOOL READERS possess many excellences over any books of the kind, with which I am acquainted, and I make use of no other in my school. The FIFTH READER, which I have introduced for my more advanced pupils, fitly completes the series. The selections in this have been made with much judgment and good taste, and the merits of the work are much increased by the *explanatory notes* prefixed to the lessons. D. C. BLOOMER.

While it [SANDERS' FIFTH READER] imparts *exact* and *essential* rules to those who wish to excel in reading, it is at the same time well calculated to exert a high moral influence, and give to the learner a correct and elevated style. I should be highly gratified to see it in general use. J. E. TOMPKINS,

Batavia, June 24, 1848. *Town Supt. of Schools.*

I concur in the above recommendation. J. G. ATWOOD,

Lockport, July 8, 1848. *Teacher of Classical School.*

Having carefully examined MR. SANDERS' SERIES OF READING AND SPELLING BOOKS, I have no hesitation in saying that they appear to me very well arranged, and graduated so skillfully as to facilitate the scholar very much. Great attention has been paid in the Reading Lessons to present agreeable, useful, instructive, and moral examples. I cheerfully recommend them as worthy of introduction into every school. JOHN WALSH,

New York, March 5, 1849. *Principal of Ward School No. 4.*

Comprising as SANDERS' FIFTH READER does a great variety of choice reading, selected mainly from the best American Authors, I do most cheerfully recommend it to the favorable notice of those who may desire a reading book adapted to the higher classes or to private exercises in the important art of reading. F. A. REDINGTON,

July 11, 1848. *Principal of Fredonia Academy, N. Y.*

After examination of the above-named book, I fully concur in the sentiment of Mr. Redington. ANSON PORTER,

Town Supt. of Common Schools of Pomfret.

MR. SANDERS:—YOUR FIFTH READER has been offered for my examination, and the taste and arrangement of the selections, I think most judicious, and as opportunity occurs, I shall take pleasure in introducing it in the school under my supervision. Respectfully,

M. A. SMITH,

Batavia, June 24, 1848. *Prin. of Batavia Female Seminary.*

I consider the Book [FIFTH READER] every way worthy of a place in our schools, where I have no doubt it will soon be, in connection with the rest of SANDERS' SERIES. O. C. WRIGHT,

June 30, 1848. *Town Supt. of Schools, Lockport, N. Y.*

Messrs. C. W. & J. C. SANDERS:—After having examined your FIFTH READER, I am fully satisfied that the selections it contains for

From Joel Marble, Principal of Public School No. 2, Albany.

Messrs. C. W. & J. C. SANDERS,

Sirs:—I received a copy of your "FIFTH READER," which you kindly sent to me, and have given it as much of an examination as my other duties would permit, but sufficient to satisfy me of its superior excellence. I think I can say unqualifiedly, that it is the best book of its kind, and for the place it is designed to occupy, that I am acquainted with. Of its many excellences I have time to speak of only one, and that is *first*, viz., its *religious character*.

I rejoice that you have given us a superior School Book with so much of the religion of *the Bible* in it. May you live to see millions of them in the Public Schools of America. JOEL MARBLE.

Albany, Dec. 12, 1848.

From Worthy Putnam, late Superintendent of Common Schools, Chautauque Co., N. Y.

I have carefully examined SANDERS' FIFTH READER, it having made its timely appearance as a sequel to his admirable "SERIES OF READERS," so generally used, and so highly and universally approved in Chautauque Co. and elsewhere, as an incomparable Series of Reading Books. The Fifth Book is admirably calculated to energize the mind, and beautify the language of the pupil, as the result of a course of Elocutionary Reading; and I doubt not, that the teacher and advanced scholar will hail the "new comer" as a welcome guest and valuable acquisition. WORTHY PUTNAM.

Sinclairville, Chautauque Co., July 8, 1848.

Extract from a Petition, presented to the Board of Education, by the Principals of the Public Schools for the city of Rochester.

"We, the undersigned teachers in the Public Schools in the city, believing as we do, that some changes in our text-books, upon certain conditions, would give a healthful stimulus, facilitating our onward progress, therefore unite, earnestly soliciting the Hon. Board of Education to substitute SANDERS' SPELLING BOOK AND SERIES OF READERS for use in our schools instead of Cobb's which are now in use."

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WM. WATSON,	"	No. 11.	A. N. MERRIMAN,	"	No. 11.

From Principals of Public Schools in the city of Buffalo.

We have examined SANDERS' FIFTH READER, edited by C. W. Sanders of New York, and find the selections appropriate, and their moral one of a highly elevated character. The work seems admirably calculated to make easy, natural, and intellectual readers.

It combines, in an eminent degree, the two essential qualities of a school book, adaptation and workmanship. It is with pleasure we give our testimony to its merit as a valuable acquisition to our school books. A. L. BINGHAM, *Prin. of Public School No.* 11.

SAMUEL SLADE, *Prin. of Public School No.* 3.

D. P. LEE, *Principal of Public School No.* 7.

June 14, 1848. E. F. COOK, 3*d Department, Public School No.* 10.

From Benjamin Wilcox, Jr., A. M., Principal of the Wilson Colleg Institute.

I have no hesitancy in commending "THE FIFTH READER" of Sanders to the patronage of our Higher Schools and Academies, is just such a work as we have long needed to finish *a consecutive s of the best reading books, in my estimation, before the public.*

Wilson, Niagara Co., N. Y. } Respectfully yours,
Aug. 12th, 1848. } BENJAMIN WILCOX,

From J. H. Partridge, Principal of Ward School No. 18, *New Y*

I have carefully examined the FIFTH READER of the Messrs. ders, and find it well adapted to the wants of the higher classes i schools. The work is divided into two parts. The first part con full and definite instructions upon the different modulations of v styles of reading, &c., accompanied by a copious and well-selecte of examples, for illustrating the principles upon which good rea depends, and fixing them indelibly in the mind. These example more numerous, varied, and appropriate, than those usually foun works of a similar character. The second part, which includes main body of the work, contains a selection of pieces from our dard authors, sufficiently extensive and varied, to suit the taste o most fastidious.

Biographical, historical, and other notes, illustrate this portio the volume. I know of no better reading book for our higher cla and would like to see it generally introduced into our schools.

J. H. PARTRIDGE,
New York, Feb. 5th, 1849. *Principal of W. S. No.*

From Wm. Belden, Jr., Principal of Ward School No. 3, *New Y*

Several of the Readers in Sanders' Series have been used for se years past in this school, with manifest advantage. I am hap express my approval of Sanders' books generally, as containi great variety of original extracts, and as well arranged.

WM. BELDEN, Jr.,
Feb. 27, 1849. *Ward School No.*

From Z. C. Graves, Principal of Kingsville Academy, and Joh Dixon, Principal of Ashtabula Academy, Ohio.

Messrs. C. W. and J. C. SANDERS—A copy of your Fifth R having been placed in my hands for examination, I take much p ure in expressing to you my belief in the superiority of your over any other of the kind, with which I am acquainted. I am pleased with your statement and arrangement of the principles of cution, and the judicious selection of examples. I believe there i to be found so choice a compilation of pieces in any other Rea Book in our schools. I shall adopt it as a text book in our institu as soon as I can procure a sufficient number of copies.

Z. C. GRAVE

I not only concur in the opinion expressed above by Mr. Grave relation to the merits of SANDERS' FIFTH READER, but have adopte book, and made it a text-book in my schools. JOHN S. DIXO

QUESTIONS

ON

BUTLER'S ANALOGY.

BY

REV. LEONIDAS L. SMITH,

NORFOLK, VA.

NEW YORK:
EWMAN & IVISON, 199 BROADWAY.

1852.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 185?
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In the Clerk's office of the Southern District of New Yo

THE ANALOGY OF RELIGION.

INTRODUCTION.

1. How is probable evidence distinguished from demonstrative?
2. Does a slight presumption for a thing make it probable?
3. How does it appear that it is of the nature of a probability? and illustrate.
4. What constitutes probability? and illustrate.
5. Do we act on probable evidence?
6. What is sufficient to determine the question, even in matters of speculation?
7. What effect should such a presumption have on us in matters of practice? and illustrate.
8. Quote the remark of Origen.
9. What would amount to a presumption that the Maker and Governor of this world, is also the author of Revelation?
10. The error of Des Cartes?
11. What error is like it?
12. What method of arguing is open to us?
13. What does Bp. B. take for granted in the outset; and why?
14. What would many, probably, suppose to be the best system of nature, that could be devised?
15. What is a full, direct, and general answer to this?
16. Mention several things of which we are incompetent judges.
17. What practical proof of God's moral perfection is mentioned?
18. What conclusion may we draw from this?
19. What is the plan of this book?
20. What does Bp. B. propose to show?
21. What will the analogy, here proposed to be considered, teach us?
22. What objections against natural and revealed religion, will it answer?
23. How much is contained in the divine government of the world?
24. What then, is the design of the following Treatise?
25. Why does the author begin with, The Future Life?

PART I.

OF NATURAL RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

OF A FUTURE LIFE.

1. What does the author propose to consider in this chapter?
2. What general law of nature in our own species, is mentioned?
3. Show that the same law holds in other creatures.
4. What inference do you deduce from this?
5. What presumption is there, that we shall retain, after death, our capacities of action, of happiness, of misery, &c.?
6. Is this anything more than a presumption? and why?
7. What term expresses this kind of presumption, or probability?
8. What reason have we for believing that anything, now existing, will continue to exist a moment longer?
9. If death be not the destruction of our living powers, what can destroy them?
10. Show the ambiguity of the phrase, *destruction of living powers;* and in what sense is it here used? See note.
11. What admission does the author here make?
12. Is there any reason for this apprehension?
13. If there be, from what must it arise?
14. Why can we not argue from the *reason of the thing* that death is the destruction of living agents?
15. What do we know of death?
16. Do these effects imply the destruction of the living agent?
17. On what does the exercise of our living powers, or the powers themselves, depend?
18. What may we infer, with reference to them, from sleep, or a swoon, (or a trance?)
19. What then, may we infer, will be the effect of death?
20. The conclusion from all this?
21. Is there anything in the whole *Analogy of Nature*, that affords us the slightest presumption, that animals ever lose their living powers?
22. What fact constitutes a probability of their retaining them after death?
23. By what is this confirmed?

24. Why then, does the author consider the imaginary presumptions that death will be our destruction, arising from our early and lasting prejudices?
25. On what supposition alone, can be founded the presumption of death's being the destruction of living beings?
26. How would you show that they are uncompounded, and so not discerptible?
27. If then, every living agent is a single being, what relation does his body bear to him?
28. What then, may we infer from this fact?
29. What reason have we, even without determining whether our living substances be material or immaterial, to conclude that our bodies are no part of ourselves?
30. State some of these facts, or experimental observations.
31. What may we learn from them?
32. The first remark suggested by this general observation?
33. The second remark, &c.?
34. Are our bodies now the same they were a few years ago?
35. The inference from this?
36. The first objection noticed, and how answered?
37. The second objection, and how answered?
38. What do these observations show us?
39. The third remark suggested, &c.?
40. Illustrate.
41. What is all that is intended to be affirmed by these observations?
42. How is it shown that our organs of sense are not percipients?
43. How is it shown that our active power remains, even after the destruction of a limb?
44. What then, are our organs of sense, and our limbs?
45. Have we any other *kind* of relationship to them, (*not degree*) than we have to a telescope or a staff?
46. What would you infer from this?
47. What objection to this reasoning is noticed?
48. What is remarked of it?
49. The first reply to it?
50. Prior to experience, could the superiority of human creatures to brutes, be inferred?
51. What general law of nature on this subject is mentioned?
52. The second reply to the objection?
53. On what are all such objections founded?
54. What observation, peculiar to mankind, and to which this objection does not apply, is here made?
55. In what two states of life and perception do human creatures at present exist?
56. Can it be shown that death dissolves anything which is necessary to us in our state of reflection, after ideas are gained? and why?
57. The inference from this fact?
58. What argument is furnished by many diseases?

59. What presumption arises from one single instance of m
disease not affecting the mind?
60. The natural tendency of such instances?
61. What is said of them as compared with the effects of sleep?
62. How is this observation carried still further?
63. What facts afford a sensible apprehension that death d
not even suspend the exercise of our reflective powers?
64. In what respects does death answer to our birth?
65. In what state may it place us?
66. What is said of our relation to our external organs of sense?
67. Even were it certain that death would suspend all our perc
tive and active powers, would this imply their destructio
If not, why?
68. What shadow of analogy might lead one to imagine this?
69. Show that there appears not even ground for the comparison.
70. The conclusion from all these things?
71. Since then, it is probable there is a future state, what m
it be?
72. How may its advantages naturally be bestowed?
73. What is remarked of the word, *natural*?
74. The inference from this?
75. What purposes are answered by the credibility of a futu
life, which only, has been here insisted on?
76. Would even a demonstrative proof be a proof of religion?
77. Why not?
78. How much has been effected by the foregoing observations?

CHAPTER II.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD BY REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

1. Why is the question concerning a future life so important?
2. Why is its consideration so important?
3. How should the least presumption of a future life affect us?
4. What remark is made respecting our happiness and mis
in the present state?
5. Have we any enjoyment without our own exertions?
6. Are all our sufferings also, owing to our own follies?
7. Why is our condition here made dependent on ourselves,
great measure? What suppositions are mentioned?
8. What objection is made, and how answered?
9. What are men apt to conclude from the uniformity of t
course of nature?
10. If the natural course of things be of God's appointment, c
the good and bad consequences that follow our actions
fortuitous?

..What is remarked of our foresight of these consequences?
2. Is the pleasure then, naturally accompanying every particular gratification of passion, intended as an incentive to us to gratify our passions, or as a reward to us for so doing?
3. Illustrate this answer.
4. What may we learn from this fact?
5. What is the proper formal notion of government?
6. Is the fact of God's government affected by the manner in which pleasure and pain follow our actions?
7. Illustrate.
8. Are all the little ills and ailments of life to be considered as instances of divine punishment? (chastisement).
9. Show that they are, and illustrate.
0. What then, is the true notion of the author of nature?
1. What does the analogy of nature teach us?

2. Why does the author propose to dwell still further on this subject?
3. What, thus far, has been shown?
4. What are the circumstances of these natural punishments that particularly deserve our attention? 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th.
5. What is said of the follies of youth?
6. What, of opportunities of improvement? and illustrate.
7. Is there a limit to self-indulgence and sin, beyond which, reformation is unavailing?
8. What is equally as ruinous as misbehavior?
9. What is remarked of civil punishments?
0. The teachings of reason and of revelation respecting a future state of punishment? See note.
1. What is remarked of the frequency of these natural punishments?
2. The language of wisdom, in the Book of Proverbs?
3. How, more literally expressed?
4. Give a general account of the constitution of nature with respect to natural punishments.
5. Is it intended to be affirmed here, that men are uniformly punished in proportion to their misdeeds?
6. What is meant to be affirmed?
7. The tendency of such reflections?
8. Why is it necessary that men should be reminded that, even on skeptical principles, there is no ground for presuming that there will be no future state?
9. What remark may hold good of any individual?
0. Is there any pretence for affirming that there is nothing, in this life, analogous to a future state of rewards and punishments?

CHAPTER III.

OF THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

1. What proves this world to be the work of an Intelligent Mi
2. How may it be shown that we are under divine government
3. How much is implied in this remark?
4. Does this fact alone prove that we are under moral gov ment?
5. In what does moral government consist?
6. In what, the perfection of moral government?
7. What is the opinion that some seem to entertain of the cha ter of God?
8. Considered as a principle of action, infinite in degree, wha absolute benevolence?
9. Supposing this to be the only character of God, what wo veracity and justice be in Him?
10. Is this actually the case?
11. What is the question here to be inquired into?
12. Is there any spot in the Universe in which God manifests H self as a Being of infinite, absolute benevolence?
13. In what character does He manifest Himself to us?
14. How is this shown?
15. Are the intimations of the moral government of God, give nature, clear to all persons?
16. Why are not the objections to natural religion, arising from fact, noticed here? See note.
17. Is the government of this world the perfection of moral g ernment?
18. What is remarked of it?
19. The design of the present chapter?
20. What instance of moral government established in nature, here noticed?
21. What is remarked concerning it?
22. How is this remark illustrated?
23. What also, does experience teach us?
24. Mention one circumstance that makes reformation difficult.
25. Should these taunts be set down to the account of the refor tion, or of former vices?
26. Is it then, doubtful, whether virtue on the whole, be happ than vice, in the present world?
27. What should the admitted fact, that God governs the world, l us attentively to consider?
28. Why cannot the future rewarding and punishing of men, considered as absurd or chimerical?
29. What instances of a right constitution of nature are daily forded?
30. What is proved by this?

1. The natural consequences of vicious actions?
2. What may be regarded as a declaration of nature against them?
3. What is necessary to the very being of society?
4. To what does this observation amount?
5. What objection is here noticed? and how answered?
6. For what other reason than as being mischievous to society, is vice punished?
7. Of what does this afford an instance?
8. Illustrate the distinction between actions themselves, and that quality ascribed to them, which we call virtuous or vicious.
9. Of what are the immediate effects of virtue and vice on the mind and temper, illustrative?
10. What is remarked of our fears and hopes of a future life?
11. What other consideration is mentioned, confirmatory of the same truth?
12. State the argument at large.
13. Mention several other particulars, &c.
14. What circumstance is mentioned as a proof of our being under moral government?
15. What examples of it are given?
16. Is vice, *as such*, ever rewarded, or virtue *as such*, punished?
17. How is this explained?
18. Illustrate your answer.
19. Show why there can be nothing on the side of vice to answer to this.
20. Suppose an instance of approbation of vice, as such, could be found, what would you say of it?
21. The conclusion from this reasoning?
22. What qualification is here made?
23. Has the author asserted that happiness and misery are distributed according to merit and demerit?
24. What results sometimes flow from the world's being governed by general laws; and from our happiness and misery being in each other's power?
25. Why is not this inconsistent with what has already been affirmed?
26. But does it not show that nature intended it?
27. Of what then, may these things be considered a declaration?
28. The consequence of co-operating with the divine administration?
29. By what is this hope confirmed?
30. What are these tendencies of virtue and vice?
31. By what comparison is the tendency of virtue to prevail over vice, illustrated?
32. The first case put, and the argument?
33. The second supposition, and the argument?
34. The third supposition, and the argument?
35. How is it shown that irrational animals have sometimes the *superiority* over rational ones?

66. In what ways is the tendency of virtue to procure superior shown?
67. What is necessary in order to the prevalence of virtue?
68. What are some of the hindrances to its prevalence?
69. Is it likely to prevail hereafter, and why?
70. The natural tendency of virtue, when seen by the vicious?
71. Why are such suppositions mentioned?
72. How should these advantageous tendencies of virtue be viewed
73. What other supposition is made?
74. Describe this kingdom; and what would be its influence?
75. Is such a kingdom possible?
76. But is it not the tendency of virtue to produce such a state things?
77. How should this tendency be considered?
78. If any one should think all this to be of little importance, h would you show him otherwise?
79. What objection might be here started?
80. How answered?
81. What admission is here made?
82. The first thing shown by the things considered in this chapte
83. How do they show this?
84. The second thing shown?
85. The third confirmation of a future state, arising from what l been said?
86. The fourth one mentioned? and explain.
87. Sum up the argument of this chapter.
88. Of what does it afford a strong presumption?

CHAPTER IV.

OF A STATE OF PROBATION, AS IMPLYING TRIAL, DIFFICULTY AND DANGER.

1. What is implied in the doctrine, that the present life is a p bationary state?
2. What is meant by this? and why?
3. Point out the difference between *probation* and *moral gove ment*.
4. What is implied in moral, and in natural government?
5. In what does natural government consist?
6. And this necessarily implies what?
7. Why should a man's temporal interest be in danger from m self?
8. How is it shown that these temptations exist?
9. The inference from all this?
10. How will this more distinctly appear?

1. What is it that constitutes this our trial?
2. In what cases would our wrong behavior be imputed to our circumstances; and in what, to our nature?
3. What is remarked of the influence of evil passions?
4. Could any one be led astray by circumstances, if there was nothing in him to render these circumstances, temptations?
5. What also, is implied, when it is said, one is misled by passions?
16. How is it shown that we are in a like state of trial with respect to this life and the future, by the same passions, excited by the same means?
17. Show the analogy between our state of trial in our temporal, and in our religious capacity.
18. State, at large, the conduct of men, in view of this state.
19. By what are the difficulties and dangers of miscarrying in our religious state of trial, occasioned?
20. By what, the difficulties of conducting ourselves prudently in respect to our present interests?
21. How are these difficulties often increased?
22. Illustrate.
23. What is our relative position among the creatures of God?
24. Why is this not a just ground of complaint?
25. What renders the state of trial which religion teaches us we are in, credible?
26. On what supposition would it seem strange that our happiness hereafter should depend on our conduct in this life?
27. How would men argue in such a case?
28. How would you show from analogy, that self-denial and laborious effort are necessary to secure future happiness?
29. Why has God made such effort necessary?
30. State in full, the argument of this chapter.

CHAPTER V.

OF A STATE OF PROBATION, AS INTENDED FOR MORAL DISCIPLINE AND IMPROVEMENT.

1. Having seen that we are in a probationary state, of much difficulty and hazard, what question naturally suggests itself?
2. Is it one of easy solution?
3. What considerations may lessen some of the difficulties attending it?
4. Is it desirable to know how to answer it?
5. What does religion teach us with respect to our present condition?
6. To what is this trial compared?

7. The *first* remark, intended to show, more distinctly, the s
ogy between them?
8. Show the correspondence between the nature and the ext
condition of man.
9. What would be the result, if this correspondence did not e
10. How would you show that we cannot be happy hereafter, u
we are *fitted* for heaven?
11. The *second* remark, intended, &c.?
12. Mention some of the things of which we are capable.
13. The effect of habits on us?
14. Give an instance of habits of perception.
15. Also of habits of action.
16. How may our habits be classified?
17. What may be included under the former
18. What, under the latter?
19. How are bodily and mental habits produced?
20. Why cannot mental habits be formed by any external c
of action?
21. How may one form good habits?
22. What is remarked of the effect of going over the theo
virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, drawing fine pic
of it, &c.?
23. How is this explained? and illustrate.
24. What inference would you draw from these facts?
25. The teachings of experience on this subject?
26. Mention three instances in which this is verified.
27. The effect of admonition, experience, example, &c.?
28. What is the particular thing insisted upon here?
29. How is this shown?
30. Why were these capacities of improving by exercise, give
31. How are maturity of understanding and bodily strength acqu
32. What would be the effect, if one were brought into the v
with both these in maturity?
33. How would such a one be likely to act?
34. By what are men restrained from acting so, now?
35. The state of man at birth?
36. With what has nature endued him?
37. In what condition does it place him?
38. How is he taught to govern himself?
39. How, to make his way through the world?
40. How do men become qualified for the employments of life
41. What is analogous to the discipline which childhood and y
afford us?
42. Suppose we know not how the present life prepares us
future state, why is this no objection to the credibility
doing so? Illustrate.
43. But, are we ignorant of this fact?
44. Show how it is such a preparation.
45. What, might we reasonably infer, from what we at present
will be our state hereafter?

16. Have we any analogy for supposing that it will be under the more immediate, or more sensible government of God?
17. Will there be any occasion in heaven, for the exercise of veracity, justice, and charity?
18. Will there be any occasion for that frame of mind or character which is formed by the daily practice of these virtues here?
19. Why do we need moral improvement?
20. Whence arises this danger of deviating from what is right, even anterior to the formation of evil habits?
21. Why cannot the principle of virtue excite these affections, nor prevent them being excited?
22. When are they felt?
23. What is our security against the danger arising from these natural affections?
24. Since these affections are a source of danger, are they innocent?
25. What, have some thought, is sufficient to restrain them? See note.
26. What two meanings may be attached to the phrase, *sense of interest?*
27. What is remarked of the opinion that this alone is a sufficient restraint to men?
28. Why does this reasonable *self-love* need to be improved, as much as any other principle in our nature?
29. How may the principle of virtue be improved?
30. What then, is our security against the danger arising from the very nature of propension? ques. 53.
31. Will these natural propensities continue with us in a future state?
32. The necessity, in such a case, of acquired habits of virtue and self-government?
33. Explain, from these things, how it comes to pass that creatures, made upright, fall?
34. Illustrate.
35. Explain also, how they may be recovered.
36. What then, may be remarked of vicious indulgence and virtuous self-government?
37. How may one become confirmed in holiness; at least, so far as it is possible to become so?
38. Can one, who comes blameless out of the hands of God, (as *e. g.* Adam did) be said to be so confirmed?
39. What would such a one need?
40. In what circumstances would they need to be placed?
41. If improvement is necessary to upright creatures, what is so to those who are depraved?
42. Why is discipline so necessary to them?
43. In what respects is the present world *peculiarly fit* to be a state of discipline?
44. Why is such experience as the present state affords, better for us than a mere speculative knowledge?
45. To what may the security of the saints in heaven be owing?

76. Why do the snares and temptations of vice render this wo so fit to be a state of discipline to those who will preser their integrity?
77. How is the habit of virtue formed? and illustrate.
78. To what is self-denial essential?
79. How may this tendency to improvement be increased?
80. What apparent exception to these observations is here mentione
81. Does the present world actually prove to the generality of me a discipline of virtue?
82. What is the great thing which renders this world a state o discipline, to good men?
83. Why is the admitted fact, that the present world does not a tually become a state of moral discipline to many, a proo that it was not intended to be such? Illustrate.
84. What remark, though not to the present purpose, is suggeste by this illustration?
85. What objection may be urged to this whole notion of mora discipline?
86. How is it answered?
87. What three great motives to obedience are mentioned; and what is said of them?
88. What is said of him who begins a good life from any one o them, and perseveres in it?
89. What other essential part of a right character, is here men tioned?
90. What alone, is it generally supposed, can give occasion for, require this virtue?
91. Show that this is a mistaken opinion?
92. Of what benefit is sorrow to us, since we shall not need p *tience*, hereafter?
93. Show that habits of resignation may be necessary for all cre tures.
94. How may these habits be formed, without the aid of affliction?
95. Why is affliction the proper discipline for resignation?
96. How is that character in us which answers to God's sovereig ty, formed?
97. Is the character which is necessary for us in mature life, ev bestowed by nature alone?
98. How is it acquired?
99. To what is this analogous?
100. What objection is vainly urged here?
101. How is it shown to be of no force?
102. What is a general law of nature, respecting our condition i this life?
103. The conclusion from this?
104. The third thing implied in this world's being a state of pr bation?
105. What may be the design of this?
106. Show that probation, in both these senses, is implied in mora government?

CHAPTER VI.

THE OPINION OF NECESSITY, CONSIDERED AS INFLUENCING PRACTICE.

What is the opinion of the fatalist?
If this be correct, what question naturally suggests itself?
Is the question to be discussed, in this chapter, absolute or hypothetical?
Why need such a question to be discussed here?
Show that the doctrine of necessity does not exclude deliberation, choice, preference, &c.
Admitting the doctrine of necessity to be true, for argument's sake, what does it not, and what does it, account for?
What question is answered by this assertion? and what is not answered?
How is this illustrated?
Why do we ascribe to God a necessary existence?
Is anything said to be *necessary*, in the same sense?
What two things follow from this admission?
The question now to be discussed?
What supposition is here made?
What would be the influence of such an education?
How would such a child need to be treated?
What conclusion would he draw from such treatment?
What would soon convince him of his error?
What are some of the absurdities into which his principles would lead the fatalist?
The inference from this?
If the constitution of the present world, and the condition in which we are placed, are the same as if we were free, can we be otherwise than free?
What is the thing here insisted upon?
If the opinion of necessity always misleads us *here*, when applied to life and practice, of what should the fatalist be afraid?
The conclusion from these things?
If the possession of will, temper, tastes, disposition, etc., in us, be reconcilable with the doctrine of fate, why not also, attribute will, character, &c. to the Supreme Governor?
What other attributes then, (the foundation of religion) may belong to Him?
Show that the notion of justice cannot be eradicated from the mind.
Does the doctrine of necessity destroy the proof of religion?
Show why it does not?
Why does the author propose to consider this subject more particularly?

30. What things already proved, are not affected by this doc
31. What is implied in the possession of a moral faculty?
32. How is it shown that the dictates of conscience are th of God?
33. What is necessarily included in a command?
34. For what purpose was the perception of good and ill given us?
35. The inference from this?
36. What obligations result from this?
37. Why can no objection from necessity lie against this proof of religion?
38. How do we arrive at the conclusion that God will rew righteous and punish the wicked?
39. How is it shown that He has told us so?
40. How is this reasoning from facts, confirmed?
41. State, in full, the nature of the external evidence whic ral religion has, and which the doctrine of necessi were true, would not affect?
42. What three things would be manifest to one, examin history of religion?
43. What are shown by these facts?
44. Did religion come into the world by revelation, or was result of reasoning, etc.?
45. What deserves here to be carefully observed with res speculative reason; and of what should this admonis
46. What might be said in reply to these arguments?
47. Reply to this reasoning.
48. Where lies the fallacy?
49. Where, upon the supposition of necessity?
50. Show that there must, of necessity, be a fallacy somewh
51. If it be incredible that necessary agents should be re and punished, what conclusion would follow with res man?
52. But if it be insisted on that men are not free, what con would follow?
53. What then, does the Analogy of Nature teach us on th ject?
54. What else, may we learn from these things?

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD, CONSIDERED AS A SCHE CONSTITUTION, IMPERFECTLY COMPREHENDED.

1. What objections may be brought against religion, to analogy can be no direct answer?
2. What is all, analogy can do?

In what way may it be of service in answering such objections?
What general answer may be given to all objections against the justice and goodness of God's moral government?
What does analogy show us with respect to the scheme of moral government?
Can there be any action or event entirely unconnected with every other action or event?
Suppose it have not, so far as we can judge, any immediate connection with other actions; what conclusion may we yet draw?
What reason may we assign for such a conclusion?
By what agency is everything in nature brought about?
What is said of the agency of even the most insignificant actions?
What should lead us to infer that the moral world and government of God should be incomprehensible?
What is said of the connection between the natural and moral constitution and government of the world?
What is the particular thing to be observed here?
Illustrate your meaning by examples?
Supposing this to be the case, why are we not competent judges of this scheme?
Are men willing to acknowledge their ignorance, when they come to argue against religion?
How, have some asserted, might the origin and continuance of evil have been prevented?
How may these objections be answered?
Were these assertions true, what is the most they would prove?
How is it shown that they are mere arbitrary assertions?
If a man, contemplating any one providential dispensation, should object, that he discerned in it a disregard to justice, or a deficiency of goodness, how might he be answered?
Why should this be considered a satisfactory answer?
In what other way, may it be shown how little weight is to be laid upon such objections?
The first thing noticed, in illustration of this remark?
What else does experience teach us?
What may we infer from these observations?
Suppose we cannot see any tendency in these means to produce such effects, is this any presumption against the fact?
What then, may be observed of those things which we call irregularities?
What absurd and wicked conclusion have some drawn from these observations?
What remark is made to obviate any such conclusion?
How is this remark illustrated?
How is the natural government of the world carried on?
What should lead us to conclude that there are wise and good reasons for this?
How is this illustrated?

35. Can irregularities possibly be prevented by general laws?
36. What are we apt to think in regard to them?
37. What would be the natural effects of such interpositions?
38. Are the visible and immediate effects all that would result f them?
39. What then, may we conclude from these things?
40. What objection may still be urged?
41. The first reply to it?
42. Illustrate this answer.
43. Why is it frivolous to assert that our ignorance invalidates proof of religion, as it does the objections against it?
44. The second reply to the objection?
45. Whence do moral obligations arise?
46. Show that they would be certain too, from considerations interest?
47. The third reply to the objection?
48. The fourth and last reply?
49. What does analogy show us?
50. Show that, by taking into account our ignorance, we are jud ing from experience.

CONCLUSION.

1. What may we learn, with respect to this little scene of hum life, from the observations of the last chapter?
2. What is remarked of the course of things which comes wit our view?
3. What, of the scheme of divine government, in which we placed?
4. Why are we compelled to assume the existence of an inte gent Author and Governor of the world?
5. What is implied in the very notion of such a Being?
6. What leads us to conclude that this will and character must moral, just, and good?
7. What led the Author of the world to form and govern it, as does?
8. What thoughts should this naturally excite in our minds?
9. Why should we reflect on these things?
10. What reason have we for concluding that we shall continue exist hereafter?
11. The only ground any one can have for supposing otherwise
12. Show that this is contrary to experience.
13. The only supposition which we ought to go upon?
14. What will be our condition hereafter?
15. On what will it probably depend?
16. What reason have we for this opinion?

To what conduct has God annexed happiness; and to what, misery?
How is this confirmed from the constitution of the world?
What is the objection to the assertion that the tendency of virtue is to produce happiness; and how is it answered?
How then, is it shown that God exercises a moral government over the world?
What inference may we derive from this fact?
How would you show that our happiness hereafter will probably depend on our conduct here?
And how, also, that there may be difficulty and hazard in securing it?
Why were we placed in such a state of trial, here?
Mention four considerations that render this intention of nature highly credible.
On what are objections founded against the whole notion of moral government? and how have they been answered?
What effect should these things produce on the minds of men?
What should be their conduct, in view of these facts?
By what consideration is this enforced?
What has sometimes been alleged as an excuse for a vicious course of life?
Show that it is a miserable one.
What are the proper motives to religion?
By what are the dictates of reason confirmed?

PART II.

OF REVEALED RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

On what ground do some reject revelation?
What, of itself, shows the necessity of revelation?
Why is it a wild and random assertion, that revelation is a thing superfluous, and of no use?
On what ground do others overlook revelation?
What, do they assert, is the only design of it?
What is observed of this way of considering revelation?
On what supposition alone, can it be a matter of indifference whether to obey or disobey, the commands of Christianity?
Why is it impossible for us to be assured of this?
Under what two aspects may we consider Christianity?

10. How is Christianity a republication of natural religion?
11. What more than a *republication*, is it intended to prove?
12. What were the miracles and prophecies of the Scriptures?
13. What else do they prove? and how?
14. Show how miracles may prove natural religion.
15. Show, still further, that revelation is an authoritative republica tion of natural religion?
16. What doctrines are taught in the Gospel, with a clearnes compared with which, the light of nature is darkness?
17. How does Christianity, now that miracles have ceased, ser the ends and purposes for which it was established?
18. Why was a visible church instituted?
19. How does a visible church tend to promote natural religion?
20. In what does the visibility of the church consist?
21. Of what advantage are such institutions?
22. On what principles alone can objections be urged against a this?
23. Can it be truly said that Christianity has ever produced any ill effects?
24. Why cannot the corruptions and abuses of it be insisted on : arguments against it, upon principles of theism?
25. What, are we taught by experience, is God's general rule of government?
26. What things, thus far, have been mentioned, as showing th importance of Christianity?
27. How is this still further shown, in a practical sense?
28. In what further view is Christianity to be considered?
29. What is this dispensation, and what are these precepts?
30. How may the importance of these duties be judged of?
31. Illustrate.
32. In stating this matter more fully, what is the first thing to b considered?
33. In what does the essence of natural, and of revealed religio consist, considering religion as an inward principle?
34. From what arises our obligation to pay these regards?
35. What are these religious regards?
36. How do we learn in what external manner this inward worshi is to be expressed?
37. Is the worship itself a matter of pure revealed command?
38. What do those persons forget, who think the Christian religio of little importance, provided natural religion be kept to?
39. What is said of the obstinate, or even careless, disregard t Christ, in His relations to us as Redeemer and God?
40. Why is it infatuation to neglect to avail one's self of the mea of obtaining divine assistance?
41. The conclusion from all this?
42. Supposing Christianity to be credible, what is our highest dut
43. The *first* deduction from the foregoing observations?
44. What is the distinction between moral, and positive precepts
45. From what do moral, and from what, positive duties, arise?

7. Is any duty to be regarded as either positive or moral, from the *manner* in which it is made known? and illustrate.
7. Under what twofold consideration do positive institutions come?
8. The *second* deduction from the foregoing observations?
9. Show that positive institutions in general, have the nature of moral commands; and illustrate.
0. What caution should be observed in comparing positive with moral duties; and why?
1. Why should we obey a *moral*, in preference to a *positive*, standing precept, if we obey but one?
2. In what case is the observance of positive institutions of no value, at all?
3. What may be regarded as a plain intimation of God, which should be preferred, when moral and positive laws interfere?
4. Are we often called upon to decide such a question?
5. In what have mankind, in all ages, been prone to place their religion?
6. How is it shown that all notions of this kind are subversive of true religion?
7. On what do the Scriptures lay most stress?
8. On what occasions did our Lord intimate His preference?
9. What is remarked of the text, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice"?
0. What is remarkable with regard to these words? and why?
1. What is mentioned as one of the peculiar weaknesses of human nature?
2. Of what should we remind ourselves?
3. What obligation does the account now given of Christianity, impose on us?
4. If, in examining revelation, we find any passages, the seeming meaning of which is contrary to natural religion, what may we conclude?
5. But what, if such interpretation contains a doctrine, which the light of nature cannot discover; or a precept, which the law of nature does not enjoin?

CHAPTER II.

OF THE SUPPOSED PRESUMPTION AGAINST A REVELATION, CONSIDERED AS MIRACULOUS.

1. What things, thus far, have been considered?
2. The next thing in order, to be discussed?
3. What common opinion with respect to Christianity, is here noticed?
4. Is there any presumption, from the analogy of nature, against the Christian system?
5. If there be, from what alone, could it arise?

6. Show that there is none, on account of its not being disco able by reason or experience.
7. Nor, on account of the things contained in it, being unlike known course of nature.
8. Mention several invisible miracles.
9. What is it that is here particularly observed?
10. Why is there no presumption against miracles, at the b ning of the world?
11. Show this in another way.
12. In another way, still.
13. What do we learn from history and tradition respecting the gin of religion?
14. What is remarked of this fact?
15. What objection is still urged on this point?
16. When alone, can we raise an argument from analogy, ag revelation, considered as miraculous?
17. What would be a parallel case?
18. Would such a case afford any *proof*, on the subject?
19. Show that it would be *infinitely* precarious.
20. The only material question, on this point?
21. Mention a second reason why a proof from such a case w be infinitely precarious.
22. What gives a real credibility to the supposition, that miracu interpositions might be a part of the original plan of thir
23. The last consideration, in reply to the objection that the some peculiar presumption, from analogy, against mirac
24. What must be considered, before any one can determine wh there be such a presumption?
25. The conclusion from all this?

CHAPTER III.

OF OUR INCAPACITY OF JUDGING WHAT WERE TO BE EXPEC IN A REVELATION; AND THE CREDIBILITY, FROM ANAL THAT IT MUST CONTAIN THINGS APPEARING LIABLE TO JECTIONS.

1. Against what, have objections been alleged, besides the dences of Christianity? specify particulars.
2. What puerile objection has been urged by some?
3. What is it the design of this chapter, to show?
4. What would prove a supposed revelation to be false?
5. What is remarked of objections against Christianity, as di guished from objections against its evidence?
6. What do we learn from Scripture respecting the governm of God?

7. What is observed of the natural and revealed dispensation of things?
8. What does experience teach us of the course of nature?
9. What may we infer from this respecting the revealed dispensation?
0. Illustrate.
1. To what are these observations particularly applicable?
2. Show this in detail, in twelve particulars.
3. What may be said with respect to some of these circumstances?
4. How would you reply to the objection?
5. What is the only question concerning the truth of Christianity; and why is this the only one?
6. What is the only question concerning the authority of Scripture?
7. If this be so, what things, sometimes objected to the Scriptures, fail to overthrow their authority?
8. What alone, could overturn Revelation?
9. Is the same mode of arguing applicable to the Bible, in all respects, as to other books?
0. Illustrate.
1. The reason of the difference?
2. What question is asked here of internal probabilities?
3. Show that it is alleged here to no practical purpose.
4. What does the analogy of nature teach us respecting the preconceived expectations which men are likely to have of the Scriptures? and why?
5. What is remarked of the instruction which God affords to brute creatures, by instincts; and to man, by instincts and reason?
3. Illustrate.
7. What inference may we deduce from these things?
3. What is remarked of objections against the Scriptures, and Christianity in general?
9. What objection is made against the miraculous gifts of some of the early Christians?
). How is it answered?
L. What sort of persons, might we have supposed, would be endowed with miraculous powers?
2. How does it appear that we are not judges in what degree and manner God should interpose?
3. Show in what other respects there is a resemblance between the light of Nature and Revelation.
4. In what way are all improvements made?
5. Show that it is not incredible that there are many truths in the Bible, not yet understood.
6. In what respect, may it be objected, that this analogy fails?
7. What may be said in reply to this?
8. What further objection is urged?
9. How answered? and illustrate.
0. What is the just consequence from all these things?
1. What of revelation, comes under the cognizance of reason?

42. What is meant by, reason judging of the morality of Script
43. What is said of those particular precepts in Scripture, give particular persons, requiring actions, which would be moral and vicious, were it not for such precepts?
44. Why is it right to take life, when commanded by God?
45. Why has Bp. B. noticed such precepts?
46. What question alone, respecting Christianity, needs to be cussed?
47. Why is this the only question?
48. What presumptive proof is mentioned, of Christianity, not ceeding from enthusiasm and political views?

CHAPTER IV.

OF CHRISTIANITY, CONSIDERED AS A SCHEME, OR CONSTIT TION, IMPERFECTLY COMPREHENDED.

1. What has been shown in the preceding chapter?
2. On what ground may it be alleged that this is a very pa answer to such objections?
3. How is it proposed to be shown that the things objected to, wise, and just, and good?
4. What affords a sufficient answer to objections against the w dom, justice, and goodness of the constitution of nature?
5. Why is this a sufficient answer?
6. How is the moral government of God, exercised?
7. What relation does Christianity bear to this general plan providence?
8. What else is said of Christianity?
9. What are some of the parts of this economy?
10. How is it known that this scheme is but imperfectly com hended by us?
11. Show that our ignorance is an answer to objections against perfection of Christianity?
12. What may we learn from the fact, that, in the Christian dis sation, as much as in the natural scheme of things, me are made use of to accomplish ends?
13. How does Bp. B. undertake to prove that the Christian dis sation may have been, all along, carried on by general la no less than the course of nature?
14. State, at large, the reasons why we conclude that the wh common course of nature is carried on according to gen fore-ordained laws.
15. If it is only from analogy that we conclude this, then, what may analogy teach us?
16. Specify, in some particulars.

Reply to the objection that these laws are unknown to us.
To what are the appearances of deficiencies and irregularities in nature, owing?
The inference from this?
What two classes of objections against Christianity have been answered in this, and the preceding chapter?
The next thing proposed to be done?
What is the objection against the whole scheme of Christianity?
How is it answered?
Do we know what are *means* with God, and what, *ends*?
What do we certainly know, on this subject? and illustrate.
How do God and men differ in their actions?

CHAPTER V.

THE PARTICULAR SYSTEM OF CHRISTIANITY; THE APPOINTMENT OF A MEDIATOR, AND THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD BY HIM.

What has been most objected against, in Christianity?
The first remark made on this point? and illustrate.
In what way does God exercise His visible government over the world?
The inference from this fact?
What fact must be assumed, before we can enter into a consideration of the revealed doctrine of redemption?
What is implied in this fact?
Of what things connected with this fact, are we ignorant?
What does analogy teach us, may be the manner in which future punishment will follow sin?
What objection may some good men make to this remark?
Show that it is unfounded?
Is it a matter of any moment, so far as the argument is concerned, whether this supposition be true or not?
Mention some things in the constitution of nature, or the appointments of Providence, analogous to the revealed doctrine of redemption.
In what way, more desirable than the present, are we apt to imagine, the world might have been constituted?
How has God actually constituted it?
Illustrate.
In what other manner might the world have been constituted? and what might have been the result?
Show then, wherein consists both the severity and the indulgence, or compassion, of the present constitution of nature?

18. What do these things teach, respecting the revealed doctri of redemption?
19. Why may some wonder at finding it made a question, whet God has made provision for rescuing man from the con quences of his own sins?
20. Why is it not a subject of wonder?
21. What evil has man done, for which he should be punished?
22. What are often, the effects of vice in the present world?
23. What may we infer from this?
24. Is there any probability that anything we could do, would alo and of itself, prevent the consequences of sin from bei inflicted?
25. Show that the contrary cannot be proved.
26. What does analogy teach us? and, show *how*.
27. What do we learn also, from the practice of civil governme and from the general constitution of nature?
28. What, from the prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices through the heathen world?
29. The inference from these things?
30. What then, does revelation teach us?
31. How was the redemption of the world effected?
32. What considerations show what little reason men have to o ject to the Scripture account of the degradation of huma nature?
33. The effect of the first sin of our primogenitor?
34. How is Christ's office as Mediator, represented to us in t Scriptures?
35. How is He described in the Old Testament?
36. What objection is urged against this?
37. How is it answered?
38. The originals of the Levitical priesthood, and of the taberna made by Moses?
39. What then, is the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews?
40. What texts are quoted in proof?
41. In what other way do the inspired writers speak of the satisfa tion of Christ?
42. Under what three heads do divines usually treat of the office Christ, as Mediator?
43. What has He done as our Prophet?
44. How does He act as our King?
45. How, as our Priest?
46. How did sacrifices originate?
47. How did the ancients suppose pardon to be obtained by sacrifice
48. Have the Scriptures explained this subject?
49. State the doctrine of the Gospel on this subject?
50. Our duty, thereupon?
51. How does it appear that we are not judges, antecedently revelation, whether a Mediator was necessary or not, prevent future punishment, and secure to us future hap ness?

Of what else are we, for the same reasons, not more the judges?
The inference from this?
In what case only, can an objection against any particular part of Christ's mediatorial office, be urged?
What one is urged, that looks to be of this positive kind?
Show that this objection proves too much.
Show that the objection is stronger, in one respect, against natural providence, than against Christianity.
What is implied in the world's being under the righteous government of God?
What, for aught we know, may be absolutely necessary, in order to the completion of this moral scheme?
Show that vicarious suffering is a providential appointment of every day's experience.
To what only, then, can be attributed the objection to the satisfaction of Christ?
Why do any conclude that the sufferings of Christ could not contribute to the redemption of the world, unless by arbitrary and tyrannical will?
Admitting, for argument's sake, that this is an objection against Christianity, what does it amount to?
What is said of arguments against particular dispensations of God, when the reasons of these dispensations, are unknown?
What makes the folly of them still greater?
What do both reason and analogy teach us, on this subject?
How are we taught how to behave ourselves; by reason, or by experience?
The extent of our knowledge of God's providence?
How does this compare with our knowledge of revelation?
Do we know the reasons of all the Christian precepts?
The design of positive institutions?
Whence arises our duty to Christ?

CHAPTER VI.

THE WANT OF UNIVERSALITY IN REVELATION; AND OF THE SUPPOSED DEFICIENCY IN THE PROOF OF IT.

What objection is sometimes urged against revelation?
How may the weakness of these opinions be shown?
Mention the suppositions on which they are founded?
By what are they contradicted?
Mention several instances in the natural government of God, in which men act on uncertain evidence.
Do not men often engage in pursuits, in which the probabilities of success are greatly against them?
Are the blessings of life bestowed equally upon all?

8. Do these things prove that God is not the governor of the wo
9. Has the evidence for the Jewish, or for the Christian religi been always the same?
10. During what period was the evidence for the Jewish relig strongest?
11. In what respect has the evidence for Christianity been stron than it is now?
12. In what respect is it stronger now, than it ever was?
13. In what respect has the evidence for Christianity been perfe uniform, and of a piece with the conduct of Providence, the distribution of other blessings?
14. Illustrate.
15. What consideration is sufficient to show that there is nothi shocking in all this?
16. Is as much expected by God from those in heathen lands, from Christians?
17. The law of Scripture, on this subject?
18. Is the condition of all persons here, with respect to futu equally advantageous?
19. In what other respects is there a difference among God's cr tures on earth?
20. Can we account for this difference?
21. Of what may our present state, possibly, be the consequence
22. Were revelation universal, would this make the religious si ations of all persons, in all respects, equal?
23. What would cause the difference?
24. Mention one possible benefit of the evidences of religion appearing obvious.
25. Why may we not be in a state of probation, with regard to exercise of our understanding on the subject of religion, well as, with regard to our behavior in common affairs?
26. Mention some reasons that go to prove that we are.
27. What is said of inattention, negligence, and want of seri concern, on the subject of religion?
28. What, of active solicitude about it?
29. What then, constitutes religious probation?
30. Show that the evidence of religion, though in the highest degr doubtful, will put men into a general state of probation, the moral and religious sense.
31. What is said of the apprehension that religion may be true?
32. What effect should it have on us?
33. What would be the tendency of such behavior?
34. What is said of the responsibility of men of great influence, strong intellect?
35. What does doubting, necessarily imply?
36. Show that this is so.
37. How many intermediate degrees are there between no evide at all, and that degree of it which affords ground of doubt
38. What is said of one who is uninfluenced by a lower degree evidence, when discerned?

9. What is remarked of the difficulties on which the evidence of religion is involved?
0. The benefit of temptations?
1. Show how speculative difficulties are like them.
2. What effect should supposed doubtfulness in the evidence of religion, have on us?
3. What may be regarded as an additional discipline and improvement of virtue?
4. Of what kind of persons may the speculative difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved, be the principal part of their trial?
5. What is the chief difficulty, with some persons, in regard to conduct?
6. The true cause of men's dissatisfaction with the evidence of religion?
7. What persons are most likely to overlook the evidences of religion?
8. What may hinder one from seeing these evidences?
9. The general effect of levity, carelessness, passion, prejudice, &c. on the mind, in the investigation of truth?
0. What is said of the general proof of natural religion and of Christianity?
1. Of what are common men, capable?
2. Of what is no one capable?
3. In what way do men often become infidels?
4. What objection may still be urged?
5. How may it be answered?
6. Give a full answer from the nature of religion.
7. What is implied in our being in a state of religion?
8. What follows from this?
9. In what does our probation consist?
0. What does experience teach us on this subject? and illustrate.
1. What results from the constitution and course of the world being such as it is?
2. If the observations in this chapter are unintelligible to any, to what may their lack of understanding be owing?
3. What facts should be forced upon the reflection of such persons?

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE PARTICULAR EVIDENCE FOR CHRISTIANITY.

1. What are the direct and fundamental proofs of Christianity?
2. To what is the conviction, arising from the direct and collateral proofs of Christianity, compared?
3. How does Bp. Butler propose to treat this subject?

4. The first observation, relative to the historical evidence of the miracles of Christianity?
5. In what case would this not have been affirmed?
6. How are these miraculous facts related?
7. What other evidence have we, of the truth of these miracles?
8. What is the most satisfactory account of the establishment of the Jewish and Christian religions?
9. The just consequence from all this?
10. What observation is made respecting the Epistles of St. Paul?
11. What proof of the truth of Christianity, of a nature and kind peculiar to itself, is furnished by these Epistles?
12. What further observations are made on this topic?
13. What claim did Christianity put forth, to be believed by all men?
14. What distinguishes it from all other religions?
15. How was Mohammedanism propagated?
16. What is there peculiar in the propagation of Christianity?
17. What facts prove that the primitive Christians were really convinced of the truth of the miracles, which led them to renounce their own religion?
18. What is said of their belief?
19. Why is it real evidence?
20. Show that it is yet, distinct from historical evidence.
21. With what did Christianity have to contend, in the outset?
22. If the evidence of Christianity is so strong, on whom does it rest to show that it is not to be credited?
23. Yet, what is the proper question, in a matter of so much importance?
24. What reason do unbelievers allege against this evidence, which, in their opinion, is sufficient to destroy it?
25. How is it answered?
26. What is said of enthusiasm?
27. How is this answered?
28. What alone, could overcome such testimony?
29. Is there any such incredibility in revelation?
30. What other things are mentioned as influencing men in common matters?
31. Do these things cause us to doubt common testimony?
32. What other reason is assigned why the apostles should not be believed?
33. How is this replied to?
34. What further objection is made?
35. How is it answered?
36. What is said of fabulous miracles?
37. Show that this does not tend to bring discredit on the Christian miracles.
38. What is the effect of our being so liable to be deceived from enthusiasm in religion, etc., etc.?
39. Do these things destroy the evidence from testimony which we have, of the truth of Christianity?

10. What alone can destroy the evidence of testimony in any case?
11. What rendered the early converts less liable to be deceived in regard to the facts of Christianity, than they would have been in common matters?
12. What is said of assertions in arguments?
13. The conclusion from the foregoing observations?
14. How is this remark illustrated?
15. How does Bp. Butler propose to treat the evidence from prophecy?
16. The first observation on this subject?
17. Why is this so?
18. How is this illustrated?
19. What further observations are made under this head?
50. The *second* remark on this subject?
51. In answer to what common objection is this remark made?
52. What two kinds of writing resemble prophecy, with respect to this matter?
53. How might a man be assured that he understood such writings?
54. Apply these remarks to prophecy.
55. How did the early Jews and Christians understand these prophecies?
56. The *third* remark on this subject?
57. How is this remark illustrated?
58. Apply it to the Scripture prophecies.
59. What is the real question to be decided in regard to prophecy?
60. Did the prophets understand, or think they understood, the full meaning of their predictions?
61. How have some persons, to no purpose, endeavored to weaken the force of prophecy?
62. What might have answered some purpose? and illustrate.
63. What then, upon the whole, is the matter of inquiry, in relation to the prophecies?
64. In what respect, does Bp. B. say, some persons are deficient in integrity?
65. And what requires more modesty and fairness than many possess?
66. What conduct is evidence of great weakness of understanding?
67. What argument for Christianity does Bp. B. now propose to enter upon?
68. Why does he take up this argument?
69. What two other reasons does he assign for this?
70. The thing asserted here, which it proposed to prove?
71. Show that this revelation may be considered wholly historical.
72. The general design of Scripture, which contains in it this revelation, thus considered as historical?
73. Why does it begin with an account of God's creation of the world?
74. How does revelation regard the common affairs of this world?
75. To what extent does it contain some very general account of the chief governments of the world?

76. Show that the supposed doubtfulness of the evidence for revelation, implies a positive argument of its truth?
77. What does the Old Testament contain, besides an account of the moral system of the world?
78. How does it speak of the coming of the Messiah?
79. What supposition is made, for the purpose of illustrating the argument drawn from these statements of the Scriptures?
80. To what conclusion would such a person come?
81. How is this illustration carried on?
82. What is a remarkable circumstance in favor of the Scriptural history?
83. How is the truth of the New Testament history still further confirmed?
84. Carry on the illustration still further.
85. What alone, kept the Jews a distinct people?
86. How does the establishment and preservation of natural religion among the Jews, confirm the miracles of Moses?
87. Carry on the illustration still further.
88. How is it pretended to account for the Jews' remaining a distinct people?
89. Is the fact alone, of their remaining a distinct people, a miraculous one?
90. In what then, does the miracle consist?
91. Wherein consists the miracle in our Saviour's being born in Bethlehem?
92. In what other aspect may these events be viewed?
93. Illustrate this remark.
94. What is said of the evidence for Christianity, founded on that part of the prophetic history which relates to the situation of the kingdoms of the world, &c., from the establishment of Christianity to the present time?
95. What supposition is here made, for illustration's sake?
96. How much has Bp. B. endeavored to show, respecting these things?
97. What may unbelievers say with respect to these things, and how may they be answered?
98. What course is recommended to serious persons by this general view of the evidence for Christianity?
99. The advantage of such a course?
100. What is remarked of putting down what might be thought to make for the contrary side?
101. In deliberations concerning our conduct, what is very important to be considered? and illustrate.
102. By what is the truth of religion to be judged of?
103. By what is it proved? and illustrate.
104. How is advantage given, by the nature of this evidence, to those persons who attack Christianity, in conversation?
105. Is it possible to destroy this evidence?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OBJECTIONS WHICH MAY BE MADE AGAINST ARGUING FROM THE ANALOGY OF NATURE TO RELIGION.

Why does Bp. B. suggest and answer these objections?
The first objection?
To what is the plausibility of it owing?
In reply to this objection, what is the *first* thing to be remarked?
How have men always been allowed to argue?
What is remarked of the epithet "poor," in this connection?
Why is it a thing of consequence to show that such objections are as much levelled against natural religion, as against revelation?
How are such objections answered?
What is it plainly, very material, to observe here?
How has Christianity been chiefly indicated in this work?
The *second* remark, in reply to the objection?
State in full, the argument for the practice of religion.
In what does the chief and proper force of the argument, referred to in the objection, lie?
State the argument.
What observation is an answer to this argument?
Why is it so?
In what does the force of this answer lie?
The *third* general remark, in reply to the objection?
How far only, is it necessary that we should justify the dispensations of Providence against objections?
How is this remark illustrated?
Has the author endeavored to remove objections against the divine justice and goodness by arguing from the analogy of nature?
What then, has he endeavored to do? and illustrate.
Show that it is of weight, to prove the credibility of the things objected against, whether the objections themselves be answered, or not.
Show that objections against the credibility or truth of the system of religion, may be answered, without entering into a consideration of its reasonableness.
Is it *necessary* to show the reasonableness of every precept?
What is all that is necessary, in order to show the general obligations of religion?
And what, in order to show, the reasonableness of its practice?
To what is the analogy of nature an immediate and direct answer?
The *fourth* general remark in reply to the objection?
What other things are equally uncertain?

31. What is said of those who object to the evidences of religion as unsatisfactory?
32. Show that they forget the very nature of religion.
33. What ought to be the real question respecting the evidence of religion?
34. What never is the practical question in common matters?
35. What, in all cases, is the practical question?
36. The *fifth* general remark?
37. The object of the foregoing Treatise?
38. By what means are men put in a state of probation?
39. What do both revelation and reason teach us?
40. The *sixth* and last general remark, &c.?
41. How has Bp. B. argued in this Treatise?
42. What does he mean by arguing on the principles of others? See note.
43. What principles force themselves upon the minds of all persons?
44. Omitting these principles, in what view alone can we consider religion?
45. How has it been treated in this Treatise? and illustrate.
46. What assertion is stated here, which contains both an abstract truth and a matter of fact?
47. What supposition is made, which would be a statement of a mere fact?
48. If this fact were acknowledged, what difficulties might still be raised?
49. What then, might be said?
50. Apply this, to the subject in hand?
51. What will believers in Christianity find in this book?
52. What, unbelievers?

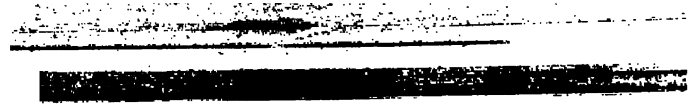
CONCLUSION.

1. Why is infidelity in man, so surprising?
2. What is said of inattention to revealed religion?
3. Why does it demand to have its claims examined?
4. How much further do many go, than merely to reject Christianity?
5. What do such as reject Christianity, seem to take for granted?
6. To what class of persons is this Treatise adapted?
7. What has been shown in it?
8. How have objections against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of the Christian dispensation been answered?
9. Mention one objection to the Christian dispensation?
10. How has it been answered?
11. How has the objection to the particular method of our redemption, been answered?

Has it ever been the opinion of any nation, that repentance and reformation were sufficient to procure the remission of sins?
What grounds have we for thinking that the punishments which are annexed to vice, may be prevented?
How would you answer the objection that, neither reason nor analogy would lead us to think, in particular, that the interposition of Christ, in the manner in which He did interpose, would be efficacious for the salvation of man?
How have the objections against Christianity, from its light not being universal, been answered?
How, from the evidence of it not being overwhelming?
To what may this alleged doubtfulness be owing?
What does doubting imply?
The conclusion from all this?
Why is immorality aggravated in persons who have been made acquainted with Christianity?
In what consists the middle state of mind, between a full satisfaction of the truth of Christianity, and a satisfaction of the contrary?
The duty of such persons?
Why are blasphemy and profaneness inexcusable?
What is remarked of the profane?

THE END.

6608 76





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